

COLLEGE ENGLISH

VOLUME 21

MAY 1969

NUMBER 3

Leo Gurko: Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* • Charles A.
Fenton: Publish or Perish Revisited • Robert E. Knoll: How to
Read *The Alchemist* • A. A. DeVitis: A Memoir of Ruth
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For Contributors and Readers

The National Council of Teachers of English is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor James E. Miller, Jr., as Editor of *College English*. Contributors may now send manuscripts to the address: Editor, *College English*, Department of English, Andrews Hall 221, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 8, Nebraska.

Dr. Miller has been Professor of English and Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Nebraska since 1956. Born in 1920, he took his B.A. at the University of Oklahoma in 1942 and his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1947 and 1949. After a year as an instructor at the University of Michigan, he went to Nebraska as an assistant professor in 1953. He served in the Army in World War II and in the Korean War.

Author of stories and sketches in *Prairie Schooner*, Professor Miller is also a prolific scholar in modern literature, having published nearly two dozen books and articles in the field in the past five years. These have been in American literature, except, partially, for "Four Cosmic Poets" (*UKCR*), which has led into a book on Whitman, Crane, Lawrence, and Thomas (with Bernice Slote and Karl Shapiro) published this month. Dr. Miller has written *The Fictional Technique of Scott Fitzgerald*, the first article on Salinger (with Arthur Heiserman, 1956), and articles on Poe (*PQ*) and Willa Cather (*AQ*). He is the author of *A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass*, the editor of the Riverside Whitman, and the author of seven articles on the poet, two in *PMLA* and the others in *ArQ*, *SWR*, *WWR*, *CentR*, and (with Bernice Slote) in *WHR*. His nine articles on Melville have appeared in *PMLA*, *MLN*, *NCF*, *JEGP*, *SAQ*, *ArQ*, *UKCR*, *BuR*, and *AIUO*.

While a retiring editor naturally looks forward to time reclaimed for professional and personal activity, he cannot, of

course, help looking backward over five years, forty issues, and some 2300 pages of *College English*. In this time, the circulation of the magazine to NCTE members and other subscribers has risen approximately from 4200 to 8000, thanks to the proportionate growth of the National Council, to the renewed interest in pedagogy, and to the never-ending research and expressiveness of some 500 contributors. It is a privilege at such a point for the editor to pay proper tribute to Dr. J. N. Hook, the best of all possible bosses, and his Council staff; to W. Wilbur Hatfield and LaTourette Stockwell, the previous editors, who made *College English*; to Professor Brice Harris, the begetter; to the many elected advisers; and to the Banta and Interstate printers, who have set and re-set so much copy. At the time of such thanksgiving, however, the editor must also recall some of the errors of typography and of judgment he has made, and wish that he could undo them.

More importantly, he would wish, at the end, to reaffirm the aims with which he began. These aims, stated in the June 1912 issue of the parent *English Journal*, and re-stated in the October 1955 *College English* were: "(1) To be representative, to 'give voice to teachers in all sorts of schools in all sections of the country,' as 'a clearing-house of opinion, experience, and investigation.' (2) To be 'progressive' (the adjective has taken on equivocal connotations since 1912): 'We do not wish to root out, tear up, and overthrow, but we are eager to move steadily forward.' (3) to aim 'at a high standard of excellence in style and typography.'" In the past five years, *College English* has aimed at, if not reached, these goals.

For the retiring editor, the experience has been an education—technical, liberal, and sentimental—and he is most grateful to the Council and the constituency.

Frederick L. Gwynn

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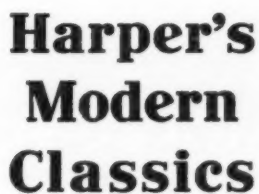
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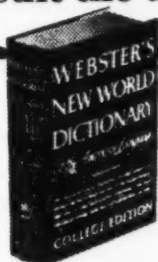
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COLLEGE ENGLISH

Volume 21

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Number 8

Under Western Eyes: Conrad and the Question of "Where To?"

LEO GURKO

Professor Gurko, Chairman of the English Department at Hunter College, is the author of The Angry Decade (1947), Heroes, Highbrows and the Popular Mind (1953), Tom Paine, Freedom's Apostle (1957), and of a half-dozen articles on modern fiction.

The central figure of *Under Western Eyes* (1911) is another of Joseph Conrad's unfilled men. Razumov measures his descent from Lord Jim and Nostromo, and is himself continued in the later work in Axel Heyst and the young captain of *The Shadow Line*.

These men are without psychological content to begin with, and acquire their personalities as a result of their experiences in the story or from the conceptions read into them by the commenting characters. Indeed, one of the plain functions of Conrad's narrators—Marlow is the best-known but by no means the only one—is to midwife these as yet unformed heroes into life and then attend their materialization.

Razumov is Conrad's richest achievement in this genre. He is introduced as a youth without personal ties of any kind and without an acknowledged family. Among eighty million Russians he "... had no heart to which he could open himself" (p. 39).¹ The natural son of Prince K, he is cut off from normal upbringing by the fact of his illegitimacy.

¹Quotations are from the text of the Canterbury Edition, Vol. XXII of the *Complete Works* (New York, 1924).

Even his face lacks individual distinctness: "It was as if a face modelled vigorously in wax . . . had been held close to a fire till all sharpness of line had been lost in the softening of the material" (p. 5). Though a student for some years, he has made no friends, his air of forbidding aloofness discouraging contact. Paradoxically, this very air is taken as a mark of intellectual profundity and moral purity, as the sign of "an unstained, lofty and solitary existence." Unknown to himself, Razumov has acquired a reputation as a man in whom one could have confidence. His isolation, and the unintended respect and admiration which it accidentally breeds, are to be the very elements that plunge him into tragedy.

The theme of Razumov's empty solitude is struck throughout the novel. "He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea" (p. 10).² "... Razumov's youth had no one in the world, as literally no one as it can be honestly affirmed if any human being" (p.

²This image strikingly anticipates the plight of Leggatt, the murderer in "The Secret Sharer," the celebrated story Conrad wrote in November 1909, two months before finishing *Under Western Eyes*.

293). He walked through "... the busy streets, isolated as if in a desert ..." (p. 297). "His existence was a great cold blank..." (p. 303). When with others, he longed to be "... in the middle of some field miles away from everywhere..." (p. 290). Significantly, the fate that he suffers at the end is to be rendered stone deaf, which gives his isolation a horrifying yet relevant sensory frame.³

Subtly reinforcing Razumov's isolation is his banishment from time. As Haldin, the student terrorist whom earlier that evening he has betrayed to the police, leaves his room, the watch slips from Razumov's nervous fingers and breaks. It is midnight. Thereafter, he passes into another universe, timeless and terrifying. "Razumov looked wildly about as if for some means of seizing upon time which seemed to have escaped him altogether" (p. 65). The next morning the watch is still stopped at twelve, and the hours drift by in oblivion. "The room grew dark swiftly though time had seemed to stand still. How was it that he had not noticed the passing of that day? Of course, it was the watch being stopped..." (p. 69). Long afterward, even when repaired, the watch keeps reminding him of the fatal evening, in its movement seeming never to have progressed beyond it. So that when he is ready to atone for the betrayal of Haldin, he—"the puppet of his past"—sits with the watch before him, waiting for midnight to begin his final errand. In murdering Haldin, he has also murdered time, and the slain dimension cuts him off from the world of light as much as the slain man.⁴

Since he has no relationships with human beings, he is driven to seek abstractions. In due course he identifies

himself with the greatest, the most remote, and at the same time the most immediate of abstractions—Russia. The novel is as much Conrad's analysis of the country oppressing his own as of the life of Razumov. The two—character and nation—are so fused at the beginning that each appears dramatized and advanced through the other.

Because Razumov feels himself blank and undefined, it is these qualities in his native land that draw him on: "Razumov received an almost physical impression of endless space and of countless millions.... Under the sumptuous immensity of the sky, the snow covered the endless forests, the frozen rivers, the plains of an immense country, obliterating the landmarks, the accidents of the ground, levelling everything under its uniform whiteness, like a monstrous blank page awaiting the record of an inconceivable history" (p. 33). The thought of this vastness fills him with "a sort of sacred inertia" and a voice within him seems to cry, "Don't touch it." At night he dreams of walking completely alone through drifts of snow in the enormous expanse of an immense, wintry Russia (p. 66). The bomb-throwing of the revolutionists appears to him pitifully ineffectual and, after a good deal of close reasoning reminiscent of Raskolnikov, grossly immoral. "And what can you people do by scattering a few drops of blood on the snow?" he bursts out at Haldin. "'On this Immensity. On this unhappy Immensity!'" (p. 61).

For that matter, what can anyone do. Razumov thinks of himself as a liberal; he is not blind to the oppressive bureaucracy. But the wild outbursts of the revolutionists please him even less. He embraces a vague *mystique* of change. Things will move somehow, under their own momentum, and though this momentum is slow, even glacierlike, it is suited to the soul of Russia, is indeed its expression. The very vagueness of Ra-

³Conrad goes to some lengths to emphasize Razumov's fine ear and acute sense of hearing (p. 291). The loss of it is thereby made climactic.

⁴The entire theme is introduced by the "mute clock" in the house of General T where the betrayal of Haldin takes place.

zumov's ecological attachment reflects the amorphous void of his temperament. Within this void there is recognizable only the impulse of self-preservation. Razumov wants to succeed in his studies and have a career—a future all the more desirable because it will enable him to merge concretely with the Russian stream. He is competing at the university for a certain silver medal. The first painful thought that passes through his mind as Haldin declares himself the assassin is, "There goes my silver medal!" (p. 16). Any suspicion that he is involved will of course ruin his hopes. Thus threatened, Razumov persuades himself to identify his own interests with the established Russian power.

When the coating of patriotism hardens sufficiently around Razumov's core of self-love, he betrays Haldin to the authorities, and soon afterward becomes himself a police spy.⁵ Part One of the novel closes with Mikulin, spokesman for the regime, asking Razumov, "Where to?" Having taken the first step away from moral isolation, he must also take the second, and soon embraces the whole tangle of commitments which his new alignment involves. Our unfilled young man now begins to assume his first visible shape.

The Russia which encloses him has already been presented to us as an organism different from our own. It is everything Western Europe is not, and when seen under Western eyes appears illogical, arbitrary, baffling, ruled by an uneasy despotism prostituting the ablest impulses of its oppressed subjects "to the lusts of hate and fear." The elderly Englishman who serves as the "Western

eyes" of the novel is a professor of languages. It is his voice that we hear first. Appropriately, he is commenting on the nature of words, which he regards as "the great foes of reality." And of all peoples it is the Russians, he finds, who love words most. So ardently do they speak, and often so aptly, that "one can't defend oneself from the suspicion that they really understand what they say" (p. 4). Such cynicism from a man who disavows cynicism stems from the pathology of a country which fascinates, mystifies, and disgusts him in about equal measure. The cruelties of the Tsarist autocracy, applied by a police force that employs torture as a matter of course, breeds in its victims a revolutionary sentiment of pure destruction that is just as monstrous. Oppressors and oppressed are morally alike. The unjust acts of the regime are well known, but the revolutionary movement can breed a sadist like Nikita who loves killing for its own sake; and even Haldin, whose motives are surely idealistic, throws a bomb at M. de P, the tyrant, which kills at the same time a number of innocent bystanders, a dreadful result that he accepts in advance. Yet Russia also breeds the noblest and purest hearts, capable of the most exquisite feelings and unselfish acts. Our language professor falls in love with Nathalie Haldin almost at once, and regards her as no less Russian than the egotistical Peter Ivanovich whom he detests.

Caught up in these extremes of Russian conduct, Razumov's dream of pursuing his private life has been shattered. Driven into the role of a government spy, he now finds himself thrown into the most intimate contact with others. Yet each relationship is poisoned by duplicity. Befriended by the students in St. Petersburg, he uses them shamefully as pawns to help his sham escape. Accepted by the revolutionary circle in Geneva, he betrays them in long reports on their activities to their enemies at home. With

⁵He is the reluctant obverse of Verloc (protagonist of the immediately preceding novel, *The Secret Agent*), who goes comfortably underground as a means of making a living. Razumov becomes a secret agent against his real will, out of artificially induced conviction; it is not a role natural to him. Between them Conrad creates a composite portrait of the underground man.

Nathalie Haldin, he poses as her brother's closest comrade though he has in fact sent him to his death. Everything conspires to make this double role successful. The illusions which everyone nurtures about him are supported in each detail by a lucky arrangement of circumstances. But the easier the part he is called upon to play, the more tense and unhappy, the more nervously agitated he becomes.

At first this agitation is prompted by a fear of exposure. As this danger subsides, Razumov, falling in love with Miss Haldin, feels a growing revulsion for what he is doing and, almost immediately thereafter, for himself. The gap thus set up between his two selves slowly widens despite his frantic efforts to bridge it. The instant that he begins to love someone else the foundations of his pure self-love are undermined, and he can no longer stand on his old ground. At the same time he makes the agonizing discovery that his attachment to Russia, deriving from self-interest, has been fed by betrayal and deception, and is therefore itself a deception. All these feelings come to a head during his long-delayed interview with Mrs. Haldin when, gazing at her hard, disbelieving, dying face his rising sense of repugnance flings him into deepest despair.

Leaving Mrs. Haldin's room, he encounters Nathalie in the hall. Driven unendurably by the widening moral abyss which he can no longer straddle, he makes his first confession. He leaves her stunned while filling the professor of languages, the unheeded witness of the scene, with proper Western indignation. Razumov rushes back to his lodging, finishes the diary that he has begun to write in an attempt to relieve his anguished feelings, addresses it to Miss Haldin, then presents himself to the revolutionaries where he makes his second confession. Razumov's soul is now purged, and he meets without resistance

the attack from the avenging roughs. They deliberately burst his eardrums, and by plunging him into eternal silence return him to an isolation even more profound than that which surrounded him at the start.

The name Razumov, in both Polish and Russian, means *understand*. Razumov's journey through the novel is an exercise in understanding. He has come to understand what Jim, Nostromo, Captain Anthony, Charles Gould, Heyst, and other notable Conradian figures discover under different though no less difficult circumstances: excessive isolation leads to moral collapse; a purely egoistic attachment to society compels betrayal; a *quid pro quo* with the world in terms of unselfish response is not a guarantee of sanity and endurance but an indispensable preliminary to them; this response does not destroy self-love but tempers and sophisticates it to the point where the tensions of living inside the ring of an inscrutable cosmos are made bearable.

Conrad had come to grips with the cosmos in his earlier work and found that it had limits beyond which men could not penetrate. They could grapple with its manifestations but could not apprehend its nature. The explanations of Christianity and other organized religions Conrad rejected long before he began to write. The existence of a *primum mobile* he could find no evidence for. The operations of a supreme moral intelligence, fashionable among Transcendentalists and Unitarians, seemed to him grimly contradicted by the common experience of mankind. He was left with a view of the world as a dramatic spectacle rather than an ethical process,⁶ whose essential character was mysterious, baffling, and inscrutable, which sometimes made sense and often did not, which was outside morality and theology, and

⁶See his famous passage on the subject in Chapter V of *A Personal Record*.

which could not be overcome by the mere application of human intelligence or will.

From the start Conrad sought in his work dramatic equivalents of this metaphysical view. The jungle of Borneo petrified Almayer in his dream of fortune and lured Willems to his final collapse. The sea was the agent which forced the crew of the "Narcissus" into its traumatic journey, thrust Jim into his great trial, taught the Marlow of "Youth" his crucial lesson, and imposed upon Captain Whalley the terms of his death. The silver mine played a parallel role in *Nostromo*, while in *The Secret Agent* the lives of the Verlocs and their anarchist circle were controlled and slowly suffocated by the iron darkness of London. Armed with these successes in the ecology of art, finding without interruption in the resources of nature physical transmutations of the metaphysical, Conrad solved the same problem in *Under Western Eyes* by discovering in his conception of Russia the frame within which the characters could be precisely refracted.

So vast a country can be controlled only by absolute force. This simple principle animating the ruling bureaucracy is bluntly expressed by General T, whose hatred of any form of change is uncompromising. He even looks upon Razumov with suspicion, for how can an informer retain the purity of his loyalty when living in close contact with the traitors he is informing against. Such rigidly ferocious logic fosters in the revolutionists a response equally rigid and ferocious, a process that forces both sides to give up something of their humanity. Dehumanization here assumes the form of betrayal, and the novel exploits the psychology of betrayal as the atmosphere into which Russia ultimately thrusts its inhabitants.

Everyone is driven to betray. Haldin kills the innocent as well as the guilty

when he throws his bomb, then draws Razumov into his dangerous affairs for no better reason than to save his own skin. Razumov turns Haldin over to the police but before doing so betrays his own avowed convictions by trying to help Haldin escape; when he finds the carriage driver Ziemianitch, who was to have arranged the escape, dead drunk, Razumov flies into a rage which leads him in the end to the police. En route, he utters Conrad's famous slogan, "All a man can betray is his own conscience," perverting it to justify sending Haldin to his death. The finality of the comment is ultimately brought home to him, but not before he has used it to clothe his ignoble act.

The other figures are caught up in the same moral smudge. Prince K, out of sincere conviction, persuades his son to become a police spy. Nikita, the avenging arm of the revolutionists, turns out to be an agent of the dreaded regime. Ziemianitch proves *hors de combat* at the very moment he is most urgently needed. Peter Ivanovich is a rapacious, self-admiring sensualist who romanticizes the oppression he suffered heroically as a young man to exploit everyone around him and particularly the revolutionary cause of which he has made himself a leader. Sophia Antonovna is sickened by the brutality employed by her fellow radicals, yet steels herself and goes on. Even Nathalie, though with the best intentions, proves treacherous; she delays in telling Mrs. Haldin of Razumov's arrival in Geneva, and thus contributes to the final morbid seizure in which her mother, rightly, believes herself betrayed and sinks stone-eyed to her death. Nor is betrayal confined to persons; institutions are contaminated as well. The most faithful figure in the novel, the Tsarist counter-espionage chief Mikulin, is tried and convicted of unspecified crimes which he did not commit by the government he has served loyally. He dies, his

lips sealed, never disclosing any of the secrets in his possession that might conceivably embarrass his faithless masters.

The necessity to betray, endemic in the Russian psyche, is matched by the equally formidable necessity to redeem. Razumov's violent confessions relieve his tortured soul and redeem his guilt. Tekla's suffering as a young girl converts her to the service of others with slavish and fanatical ardor. The good-natured student Kostia, who is ashamed of his wealth and stupidity, wishes to make up for both by plying Razumov with money and schemes to escape the country. Nathalie goes back to Russia in the end and devotes herself to helping the needy, moved in part by a desire to perpetuate the memory and especially the ideal purity of purpose which she is convinced animated her brother, in part to redeem the Russians from their own destructiveness.

The passions of the book are linked by correspondences that lie below the reading surface. Razumov passes through the same stages as Haldin. He murders Haldin as Haldin murdered M. de P. The trust Haldin displays in him is analogous to the love Razumov later feels for Nathalie. Haldin is betrayed by this trust, and Razumov is "betrayed" by his love which spurs his confession to the revolutionists. The assault he suffers at their hands is equivalent to the torture Haldin stoically endures at the hands of the police before his execution. The connection between them becomes absolute when the image of Haldin roots itself in Razumov's mind obsessively, and he becomes a double man bearing the heavy and unshakeable burden of this other self. "... Haldin, always Haldin—nothing but Haldin—everywhere Haldin: a moral spectre infinitely more effective than any visible apparition of the dead" (pp. 299-300). As he hurries home from his ugly mission to the police, he sees the phantom of Haldin stretched out in the snow. He

walks over its chest, but it refuses to disappear. Much later, as he tells his lies to Mrs. Haldin in Geneva, the phantom continues clinging to him leechlike, splitting him away from the unity and purpose he has so uneasily achieved. "... The dark prestige of the Haldin mystery ... clung to him like a poisoned robe it was impossible to fling off" (p. 299).

Another correspondence subtly links Razumov and the hapless Ziemianitch. Both are men who fail and are punished for their failure. Razumov yields to his capacity for self-deception and commits his crime against humanity; Ziemianitch yields to his capacity for self-indulgence and is in an alcoholic stupor at the moment Haldin needs him most. Ziemianitch is thrashed by Razumov and mistakes him for a devil, which indeed he is on the point of becoming. Razumov is thrashed by Nikita, an actual devil. Both are thrown down flights of stairs. Ziemianitch hangs himself in despair; in despair, Razumov falls under a tram. Curiously, both have trouble with women. The carriage driver commits suicide out of frustrated love; so, in a sense, does Razumov. Both are referred to as "men of the people"; at one point, Razumov feels "a vague, remorseful tenderness" for the other. We are asked to regard them as typical Russians.

Other suggestive images appear. The presence in the house of General T of Spontini's bronze figure "Flight of Youth" accents the grim nature of Razumov's mission there. Razumov writes both his diary and counter-espionage reports on an islet in the Lake of Geneva where the statue of Jean Jacques Rousseau stands. In this way he composes his own confessions and carries out his own social contract with the state. During the sham escape, Razumov throws Kostia's bundle of money out the train window into the emptiness of Russia, a gesture that underlines arrestingly the hollowness and mockery of his new life. When

Nathalie comes to the Château Borel, she sees no one at first, but hears a voice in the distance speaking a language she cannot make out; this eerie and unsettling experience somehow encapsulates the situation of a novel whose characters, in the midst of isolation, grope toward the sound of voices that are not quite intelligible.

This, too, is the problem for the professor of languages, the lone non-Russian in the book. He, too, hears voices, the voices of Russia, whose formal words he understands well enough but whose emotional significance lies outside both his sympathies and imagination. To him, the tragedy of life is the tragedy of language, and words, as he announces on the opening page, are a conspiracy to keep meanings and intentions from being communicated. He brings to his experience the conventional morality of the West. He is filled with "proper" indignation at the extravagant behavior of the Russians, chides them for their lack of democracy, their rudimentary sense of law and order, their cruelty and violence. But these orthodox sentiments are of no use in enabling him to understand them, and Conrad makes no effort to hide the obtuseness of his narrator⁷ while exploiting the contrast his presence makes possible between the competing systems of Eastern and Western Europe. Only at the one point of his special regard for Miss Haldin does our language professor, born though he is in St. Petersburg and speaking Russian as fluently and often

more correctly than the Russians themselves, make any genuine contact with their otherwise strange and hostile society. This is the single emotion that he shares with Razumov, and he is transfigured by it in the same way.

Love is one of the sentiments in Conrad which releases men from the suffocation of narcissism and the emptiness of non-involvement. It is by no means the only one: friendship, duty, honor, patriotism, even a diffusely warmhearted generosity, feelings intricately dissected in the other novels, have a similar cathartic effect. For an instant, love draws the professor out of his restrictive frame of judgment.⁸ It forces Razumov to examine himself as he is, free from the bondage of vanity and the desperation of loneliness. The correspondance thus set up between them establishes their common humanity⁹ and, in effect, brings together the otherwise antipathetic civilizations they represent.

In no novel is Conrad more the European than in *Under Western Eyes*, and in none is there a more inclusive arrangement of his characteristic themes. The unfilled man, the morality of isolation, ecology as a weapon in art, the cycle of betrayal and redemption, the narrator who is also a major actor, the interplay of men and milieu are given full-scale treatment. *Under Western Eyes*, with its prophetic account of the Russian temper-

⁷The emotional imperceptiveness of the West is reinforced by Conrad's deliberately complimentary references to Geneva and the Swiss. The city is "the very desolation of slumbering respectability," "the passionless abode of democratic liberty." The Swiss couple who appear briefly in Part Second of the novel are inert and bovine, "the man, colourlessly uncouth, was drinking beer . . . the woman, rustic and placid . . . gazed idly around." If the Russians suffer from an excess of feeling, the West Europeans are hobbled by a dearth of it.

⁸This restrictiveness comes out again in the way the professor discharges his formal role as narrator. In introducing Razumov's diary, he fussily observes that he is not a novelist writing a novel. This awkward pretense, common to the fiction of Conrad's day and an archaic cliché in our own, is peculiarly irritating to the contemporary reader. But Conrad intends it as an expression of the professor's character, as another sign of the fussiness and academicism which limits his capacity for experience.

⁹The link between them is suggested at the start of the novel by Haldin's references to Razumov as an Englishman (pp. 16, 22).

ament, brings to an end the three political novels Conrad wrote in succession from 1903 to 1910. It superlatively con-

cludes the first half of his career as a writer, a period marked by fifteen years of unceasing and fruitful toil.

Publish or Perish Revisited: A Forecast for the 1960s

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The problems of literary scholarship, already monumental in the ambiguities they create for all members of the academic community, are likely to be multiplied during the coming decade. The prospective swelling of student enrollments in the 1960s—both undergraduate and graduate—has already guaranteed an increasing shortage of college and university English teachers who will possess the conventional doctoral training. The statistics for the 1950s themselves are plain evidence that the proportion of undergraduate faculties with Ph.D. training has fallen sharply. The decline will certainly be accelerated during the 1960s; departmental chairmen will be forced increasingly to hire young instructors whose graduate training will consist at most of one or two years rather than three or four. The implications of this dramatic shift are particularly unsettling for English Departments.

The production and evaluation of literary scholarship are necessarily vexing under the best of circumstances. The dilemmas which they create both for the individual scholar and for the administrative hierarchy are painfully well known. The discrepancies of the doctorate, with its bland endorsement that the holder has received extensive research training and has indeed already made,

through his dissertation, an original contribution to human knowledge, are nowhere more apparent than in literary scholarship.

Despite the fact that the Ph.D. in English is in almost all cases a research degree, the percentage of degree-holders who construct productive scholarly achievement upon this doctoral talisman is infinitesimal. One doubts whether more than ten percent of all the dissertations in English and American literature are ever published either as volumes or, indeed, as monographs or articles. The percentage of degree-holders who then develop into mature scholars is inevitably only a fraction of this already small percentage. If this is the case at present, when approximately forty percent of the teaching faculties in English have completed their training in research and methodology, both critical and historical, what will the situation be ten years from now, when we can legitimately foresee English Departments staffed at the junior ranks by a generation of teachers who will have been shanghaied into full-time teaching schedules long before they have completed their professional internship?

It is tempting to speculate cynically that any change is bound to be an improvement. The failure of graduate

departments of English to stimulate productive scholarship among their disciples can hardly become more complete than it is at present. No survivor of doctoral training in English can readily forget those contemporaries who yearned so noisily for reprieve from what they saw as the unwholesome burden of term papers and theses and dissertations. "Boy, I can't wait to start teaching," they chanted daily, and finally they departed with their doctorates, to assume the fifteen-hour classroom loads of the institutions to which their lack of scholarly aspiration condemned them.

No graduate instructor, similarly, can be unmindful of those among his own students who are indifferent to or bored by the promise and rigor of scholarship. Even more painful is the number of them to whose indifference and boredom is added a lack of aptitude for either synthesis or composition. If the prevailing methods of research instruction, to say nothing of the recruiting practices, have failed so thoroughly in planting scholarly aspiration in the majority of our professional apprentices, perhaps we should benignly assume that fewer doctorates will assure us of more scholars.

Here and there this may well prove to be the case. There will always be occasional members of each scholarly generation whose gifts and vitality will be better served by immunity to the mechanical rigors of graduate training. Common sense and experience, however, give equal assurance that for the majority of literary scholars the mere example of some of their masters in graduate school, let alone the discipline of graduate training, are of irreplaceable value. If the number of consistently productive literary scholars has been small in recent years, it is certainly going to become smaller during the next generation. The application of the sanctified principle of publish or perish, endorsed in varying degree by every English Department in the United States, is going to become

increasingly contradictory, increasingly difficult, and increasingly absurd.

The principle of publish or perish, to be sure, is not sanctified by all parties to the compact. Like most human principles of selection and reward, it is endorsed by the winners and reviled by the losers. The distinction between who wins and who loses, however, is rarely a clear one. Departments which lean most heavily on publication as the single factor for promotion and appointments have not always been the beneficiaries they had anticipated; frequently they have become instead the victims of hierarchical narrowness of point of view and smugness of attitude. The young instructor whose productivity has been inhibited by departmental insistence that he publish prematurely has frequently found himself able to resume his scholarship in the less rigorous atmosphere of another institution. He was regarded as a loser, but in reality he has become a winner. The instructor whose momentary productivity or mechanical industry wins him premature promotion is apt to become, on the other hand, the professorial sluggard whose early status was the prelude to torpor or complacency. He thought he was a winner; in reality he was a loser.

Undergraduates, similarly, conceive themselves to be the invariable losers under this principle of publish or perish. They customarily conclude bitterly that all the good teachers get fired every third or fifth or seventh year; they imagine that all the inept ones are regularly promoted on the basis of obscure pedantry. Unmindful of the actuality by which the thoroughly unproductive teacher draws on a continually depleted reservoir of knowledge and breadth, the undergraduates imagine that they themselves are always the losers in this perennial lottery of publish or perish; in reality they are more frequently the winners.

The contradictions of publish or perish, in other words, are already abundant. Without some revision of philosophy on the part of English Departments during the coming decade, the damaging components of the principle will become pernicious. A situation in which only a handful of departmental members have received the basic training in research is going to assure a neglect of teaching that will surely corrode the entire discipline. If no more than twenty percent of the teachers in an English Department, for example, are equipped to compete for reward under the prevailing ground rules, the professional distress of the remaining eighty percent will be unendurable.

What is suggested by this expectation of forthcoming vocational conditions, in fact, is the pressing necessity for English departments to undertake or extend responsible methods of evaluating the teaching capacity and performance of the junior members. This kind of evaluation has always received lip service from senior men and from chairmen. The bromides on the subject are infinite and nauseous. The orderly assessment of teaching performance, however, is almost nonexistent. The truth seems to be that the methods of assessment are widely and instinctively known but seldom utilized.

Surely, for example, the use of student questionnaires ought to be introduced on a wide scale at the present time. The experience with such polls, on the undergraduate level, has been consistently reassuring. The number of questionnaires which are completed by the student in a frivolous or irresponsible way are fragmentary; instead, the vast majority are undertaken soberly and imaginatively. The pious objections to student questionnaires—undergraduates are too immature, colleagues too vulnerable, findings too inexact, odium too painful—are all dissolved by the experience of

those institutions which have employed the machinery.

With questionnaires, information about an instructor's performance is annually available from at least fifty witnesses who are in various ways qualified to judge that performance by virtue of participant experience. At the very least the questionnaires will indicate the extremes among the instructional staff; normally they will point almost infallibly to the outstanding instructor among a group of, say, half a dozen, and they will identify similarly the least effective among the half dozen. Information of this sort, obtainable in no other form and from no other source, will prevent that most grotesque of departmental errors, the gratuitous promotion of the notoriously inept teacher or the abandonment of the particularly gifted one. It will make unnecessary the preposterous reliance upon second-hand faculty innuendoes or casual student reaction.

In a period of rising undergraduate enrollments, the next step—assessment of the hypothetical four remaining instructors—should not be a laborious one. The necessities of a seller's market will probably require that at least two of the four shall be retained; if no dramatic differentiation exists as regards their teaching achievement, the chances are that the decision to retain or release can be made on the basis of future departmental needs or individual expectations of opportunity. One might even argue, plausibly, that the use of such questionnaires has an additional, subsidiary value as a pedagogical tool; the obligation to evaluate their teachers may compel undergraduates to scrutinize their own collegiate role and aspiration.

To rely entirely upon student questionnaires, on the other hand, would be an abdication of responsibility. Clearly there ought also to be an index of performance based upon the judgment of experienced colleagues. There is no al-

ternative save the maligned device of the classroom visit. English Departments have traditionally recoiled from this invasion of classroom privacy. The visitation by a chairman or a committee or by the Director of Undergraduate Studies is seen as suitable for the over-maligned teachers college, with its normal school heritage, but unwholesome and improper in the climate of a liberal arts college or university.

This kind of genteel distaste is no longer tolerable. It is to the advantage of all parties—institution, department, student, teacher—that as much exact information as possible be made available for these crucial professional decisions. It is infinitely more distasteful to be required to listen to undocumented gossip about an instructor's ability. A system of visitations which permits cross-checking of professorial response is a great deal more desirable than a system which encourages professorial whim, momentary spleen, or downright malice to dictate the decision.

Few teachers regard the presence of auditors or of casual visitors as an invasion of their classroom privacy. It is a foolish reticence which prohibits the use of official visits by one's colleagues. It is a rare teacher—at any rank—who cannot profit from the firsthand counsel of his seniors or his peers. The fear that such visits will introduce intangible coercions or censorship is a meaningless one. A departmental hierarchy capable of such coercion will certainly find other means of tyrannization if the club of visitation is not available to it.

These are the two major weapons by which young instructors, in the face of decreased training in research and reduced productivity of scholarship, can be assessed during the coming emergency in such a way that the revised professional situation may cause as little damage as possible to the discipline. No one can realistically contemplate the forthcoming decade in a sanguine mood.

The reduction in instructional standards is inevitable. The most that can be obtained is the control of the deterioration. The profession at present is in the position of the farmer who explained to the government man that he didn't want to read his pamphlets on better farming methods; he wasn't even farming *now*, he explained, as well as he knew how.

The professorial obligation to examine the dissertations of instructors up for promotion, for example, a seemingly automatic step which is rarely practiced, now becomes a requirement. It can no longer be sufficient to weigh competing bibliographies visually or by the inch; they had better be evaluated properly since they are likely to become increasingly rare and increasingly amateurish. Perhaps, in fact, the prospects are more promising than this diagnosis has indicated. Perhaps a new emphasis on teaching excellence will reduce the torrent of pedestrian scholarship which has fondered the learned journals and caused many university presses to conspire in the publication of mediocre scholarship and valueless pieces of literary editing. Perhaps too the tardy recognition of the utility of television, and the re-evaluation of our pretentious insistence on wasteful seminars, with its unrealistic mystique of the small class, will permit a fuller use of the exceptional teacher.

Whatever else the decade requires or creates, one thing is certain. It will be a decade in which faculty sovereignty over matters of appointment and promotion will receive its most severe challenge. The assumption of decision by harassed administrations will be a continual hazard. God help English Departments, with their vulnerably broad bases of staff and their tenuous standards of professional evaluation, if they surrender their mandate over personnel to presidents or deans or trustees who insist that the new enrollments require new standards or procedures of faculty selection and promotion.

How to Read *The Alchemist*

ROBERT E. KNOLL

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Although *The Alchemist* is the finest dramatic satire in English, it does not receive the attention it deserves. Obtainable in paperback (Crofts Classics), commonly it is omitted from collections of plays for undergraduates. Its relative unpopularity can be explained in a number of ways, but basically *The Alchemist* is neglected because we come expecting it to possess the aesthetic virtues we recognize in *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*. When they are not apparent, we do not know how to react. Our knowledge of Shakespeare ruins Jonson for us. In the following paragraphs I want to indicate some of the ways *The Alchemist* might profitably be read. The play has its own peculiar rewards, different from those offered by *Twelfth Night* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The central questions I seek to answer here are these: What kind of dramatic satire is *The Alchemist* and what are its peculiar virtues? Why is *The Alchemist* as it is and not different (and more like Shakespeare)? To answer I must give an account of the dramaturgical organization of the play and then of its theme.

The plot of *The Alchemist*—which everybody knows Coleridge linked with *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Tom Jones* as one of the three most perfect in literature—is generally regarded as tremendously involved. Una Ellis-Fermor in her very helpful *The Jacobean Drama* (1936, 1953; p. 115) calls it “one of the most complex groups of plots in English comedy.” My students often lose their way in its seeming convolutions and come to class not knowing what they

have read. They are confused by so many persons rushing on and off stage engaged in so much constant activity. The truth is, the action is nowhere nearly so involved as it appears to be, and in some respects it is quite simple. The incidents are arranged according to a simple pattern.

The play begins with a long first scene in which we see that Face and Subtle, aided by Dol Common, have set themselves up as confidence men. One should note two elements in this first scene: first, the game is played in the house of Face's master while he is away in the country; and, second, the alliance between the scoundrels is very precarious. We know from the beginning that they will turn on each other at the first opportunity, and we are reminded from time to time during the course of the action of this precarious yoking. With this necessary exposition out of the way—and note how it is given dramatic tension by the quarrels among the principles—the play moves immediately to a merry-go-round of activity. We are introduced in successive scenes (1) to Dapper—I, ii—who aspires to be a gambler, (2) to Druggier—I, iii—who wants to be shown how to turn a fast buck, (3) to Sir Epicure Mammon accompanied by Surly—I, iv; II, i, ii, iii—who wants to be richer than God, and (4) to Ananias—II, iv, v—the Anabaptist who wants the property of his church turned to gold. Only one other set of characters is introduced to us after this parade of gulls: (5) Kastril—III, iv—who wants to be taught to be a Roaring Boy;

he is accompanied by his sister, the rich widow Dame Pliant. Each of these persons comes to Subtle and Face as a client, for each wants to make money more quickly than can be managed legitimately. They have common aspirations.

Already Jonson's central dramatic technique is obvious. It is duplication. As in fairy stories and nursery tales, a central dramatic conflict is reiterated with variable characters in a number of situations. In the story of the Three Pigs, for example, three times the wolf has occasion to cry, "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in." In "Billy Goats Gruff," the Troll says repeatedly, "Who is that trip-trip-tripping on my bridge?" and in *The Three Bears*, somebody is always asking, "Who has been sitting in my chair, or eating my porridge, or sleeping in my bed?" Similarly here, Face and Subtle are approached five times with five similar requests. In *The Alchemist*, our interest is with the scoundrels rather than with the victims as (generally) in the nursery stories, but the pattern of action is the same. In both Jonson and the folk tale, a conflict between an attacker and different sets of defendants is repeated several times. Each repetition is riskier than the previous conflicts and increases narrative tension. Each new goat in "Billy Goats Gruff," each new house in "The Three Pigs," each new character in *The Alchemist* is bigger and stronger than his predecessors. Altogether the plotting of *The Alchemist* is hardly "complex" as the critics say; it consists simply of a number of duplications of a single nursery situation. The plotting is really quite straightforward. Compared to this, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with all its cross allegiances and complicated identities, is a labyrinthine confusion.

The duplicating stories in this play differ from one another more in intensity than in complexity. As each new situation is introduced, we see not only

that its protagonist is more corrupt than those previously introduced, but that he introduces a more profound moral problem. If Dapper, the first applicant for Face's illicit assistance, wants to win at gambling, no worthy man is hurt thereby. If Drugger, client number two, wants to attract customers by trickery (one thinks of Madison Avenue), gullibly but relatively innocent customers are the losers. Sir Epicure Mammon, client number three, by aspiring to unlimited power promises to corrupt the world and all its people. He deserves a low circle in hell. Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome, in bringing the property of the orphans to be metamorphosed to gold, are already corrupted; they are hypocrites and sophists. They find a place even lower in the ever-burning pit of sulphur. The various gulls are introduced one at a time, in a descending order of moral depravity. We have met them all, successively, by II, v.

In their later, as in their initial, appearances each of these five groups of characters is kept artfully and marvelously separated from all the others; if these situations were historical rather than dramatic, Ananias, Sir Epicure, Drugger, and Dapper could not be kept from meeting. More important the dramatic experience of each group duplicates the dramatic experience of every other. Dapper, who wants to gamble, after I, ii appears again in III, v; then he is bound and gagged and "laid aside" for the rest of the play. Even in III, v he is only momentarily our exclusive concern. Our experience with Drugger, the tobacconist, is similar. After his introduction, he reappears alone only in II, vi, promising to bring Kastril and Dame Pliant to the gullers; thereafter he never holds the center of the stage. He is, in effect, dropped. Sir Epicure, after his spectacular entrance (II, i, ii, iii) repeats his Godlike aspirations only once, in IV, i; and then in IV, v he is gulled

and dismissed. The fifth group of characters also appears only a couple of times. After a lengthy introduction of the Puritans (II, iv, v) we see them again in III, i, ii (only one scene separates these two appearances) and then we are through with them until their brief appearance at the end of the fourth act. Kastril, the only remaining character, after his delayed introduction (III, iv), appears only twice in IV; Dame Pliant is completely passive and is more a piece of furniture than an actor. The situations dealing with Dapper, Druggier, Sir Epicure Mammon, and Ananias are each handled separately and briefly and reach their climaxes independent of one another. Our interest alternates among them. Jonson uses a single dramaturgical technique for all of them: First an introduction, then an interval of neglect, finally the gulling. This duplication of action is a triumph of artifice; but it is not complicated. A simple situation is repeated five times. One must not mistake quantity for complexity.

There are two plot elements which I have passed over until now because they seem rather unlike the five situations which I have been discussing. One deals with Surly and the other with Lovewit. Surly alone sees through the rogues' pretensions. Whatever crossplotting the play contains comes through him. He ties the disparate elements together. And yet even when he tries to expose Subtle and Face to the others (in IV, vii), the five plot lines are separated. As a result right down to the end of the fourth act Jonson juggles his five plots, never allowing their actions to become tangled, scarcely allowing them to intersect one another. Lovewit appears exclusively in the last act. When it begins, the confidence men have been successful. Now the central dramatic conflict shifts. During the first four acts, the principle conflict has been Face versus the gullible. But Face at last is in conflict with Love-

wit, and he is on the defensive. Suddenly all the gulls appear on stage simultaneously, for the only time in the play in which they appear together. Even now, it should be noted, they are collection, not a group. In a brilliant maneuver Face recovers from their attacks and, thanks to Lovewit, comes off scot-free. But though the avaricious fools are thus finally lost, Face for the first time does not win. For the first and only time, the biter is bitten. We leave the play unconvinced that Face will suffer much or for long; Lovewit had best watch his step or he too will be outsmarted. Given a chance, Face will surely play Mosca to Lovewit's Volpone.

For all the multitude of detail, the pattern of plotting in the play is clear. The action alternates among five different intrigues, all of which duplicate one another in outline—introduction, interval, gulling. It is imperative to note that there is no development in the play; each character and each action remains at the end substantially what it was at the beginning. Jonson merely tells the same story over five times with five different sets of trappings. The five groups appear as a quintet only in the last scene. By this time Face is engaged in intrigue number six, with Lovewit. The action of the play is not complicated; it is only multiplied. Compared to Shakespeare, this is the simplest kind of plot; Shakespeare is never so redundant. If the action does not develop, it constantly accelerates; and this increasing speed of action is the cause of its very real charm. (The *CHEL* says, "What most discourages the reader of Jonson is the absence of charm," VI, 30). The place of acceleration is uniform. (Miss Ellis-Fermor makes this point in her book, pp. 45-46.) Each new incident moves a bit faster, requires a bit faster thinking on the part of the cony catchers, comes on the heels of its predecessors a bit sooner, than the one ahead of it. But it is not basically different from its predecessors.

The formal arrangement of *The Alchemist* is repetitive. The single didactic theme is equally repetitive and equally lacking in development. It has been said that this play is a gigantic attack on avarice, that underlying all the actions of all the characters is an inordinate desire for gain. "Be rich," Sir Epicure cries. The theme of this play, however, should not be so oversimplified. The "meaning" of the play is a good deal more complex than this even if its characterizations and plotting are not. *The Alchemist* is essentially a Christian play. Jonson is here concerned with showing how false gods may usurp the very name and ritual of the true God. His play deals with religious perversions. Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome obviously hide irreligious acts under religious cloaks. The scenes in which they speak in the accents of Old Testament prophets accentuate their distance from the prophets and show their meanness. To overlook the Biblical echoes in their speeches (who can?) is to miss half the fun of the satire, and its point. The climactic scene with Dapper also has its Christian significance; but it is not, I think, so obvious. It depends for its ultimate success on reference to Christian ethics and rituals. In III, v, Face, Subtle and Dol persuade Dapper that to earn the favor of "her Grace," the Queen of Faery—that is, to persuade her to respond to his prayerful petitions—he must "throw away all worldly pelf" and "keep nothing that is transitory" about him (III, v, 17, 30). The means to "grace," they tell Dapper, are the traditionally Christian humility, poverty, and obedience; Dapper puts these virtues to service of the wrong god and they cease to be virtues and become ridiculous. The scene reads like a Tudor interlude, for here as in the morality plays the protagonist is bedeviled by demons attempting to force him into a decision. The joke is that the decision is "moral" only by a wild stretch of the imagination and the "demons,"

far from being supernatural, are Dol, Face, and Subtle. The scene is a burlesque, almost a parody, of the old ritual drama.

The Ananias-Tribulation Wholesome scenes are clearly an attack on sophisticated religion; the scenes with Dapper are a burlesque of traditional beliefs turned to false purpose. The scenes with Sir Epicure Mammon also have their religious significance. Sir Epicure wants to correct that nature which is a manifestation of the Almighty; he wants to improve on God. When he cries to Surly, "Be rich," he echoes God's commandment that there be light. Subtle says of him:

He will make
Nature ashamed of her long sleep, when art,
Who's but a stepdame, shall do more than
she,
In her best love to mankind ever could.
If his dream last, he'll turn the age to
gold. (I, iv, 25-29)

Like Faustus he is drunk with the idea of power, and like Faustus the power to which he aspires is directed to no service but his appetite. Sir Epicure is more than avaricious. In attempting to out-God God, he is sacrilegious. His is a mortal not a venial sin.

Subtle, the alchemist, also aspires to the Godhead. He even conceives of himself as a kind of God already. Though his philosopher's stone is only a ruse, he thinks himself something of a maker. When he addresses Face, for instance, his words remind us of the Voice out of the Whirlwind, the incomprehensible Creator:

Slave, thou hadst had no name—[without
me] . . .
Never beene knowne, past *equi clibanum*,
The heat of horse dung, under ground, in
cellars,
Or in alehouse, darker than deaf John's
been lost
To all mankind but laundresses, and tap-
sters,
Had not I beene. (I, i, 81, 83-87)

Subtle, Sir Epicure, all the persons of the play, suffer from this sin of pride. They want to turn the world to their purposes, whereas they ought, in the Christian view, to seek the place themselves humbly in the service of this world's God.

So far I have simply pointed out religious overtones in some parts of *The Alchemist*. As a matter of fact, the whole play is a reworking of the Parable of the Talents. There was a certain man who, going into the country, called his servant to him and delivered to him his house and his property which he was to keep against the master's return. With industry the servant made the property pay him great dividends; and when the master returned, he called him to an accounting. The servant in fear turned his profit over to the master, for the master reaps where he does not sow and gathers where he does not reap; and he received back his own with interest. The servant's unprofitable assistants were cast out of the house, and the profitable servant was received into the master's bosom. This parable can be used and no doubt was used by persons like Tribulation Wholesome to defend all kinds of eccentric business practices. In the Parable, the Master does not inquire how the servant had increased the wealth; he does not even ask the rate of interest; he does not seem to notice the "interest" which was forbidden by traditional Christian (medieval) strictures against usury. In fact the Parable can be made to indicate that the Master would have us all make money; in this view material prosperity is both a responsibility laid upon us all and a means to Divine favor. The view that prosperity is evidence of Divine favor is not dead even now. In this play Jonson gives a Puritan reading of the

Bible to show up its shabbiness. Its relevance to modern times needs no development.

The Alchemist deals with avarice obviously, but it deals with avarice in the context of a full system of religious morality. What Jonson objects to essentially is not that one man can and does cheat another, or that one group takes advantage of another. He treats the rascals and the fools with equal dispassion. This satire is not primarily concerned with what man has made or can make of man. Jonson objects to excessive ambition because it is an offense against God's ordering of things. When a man aspires to be more than he was born to be, he is in effect assuming that he knows better than God the place to which he should have been called. Seen in this light, *The Alchemist* is a religious not a social tract, directed against the impious not against the anti-social. It is not, in final analysis, a social satire tied to the changing conditions of a single society. This central religious meaning is discoverable in every character, in every scene, of the play. Jonson drives his point home by repetition. It is this principle of repetition which organizes the plot and determines the characters. Jonson presents impiety in a number of aspects, in a number of similar situations. But like the plot, the central idea is not developed. The essential brilliance of the play can be seen when one observes the simplicity of the central dramaturgical principle. If Shakespeare is rich, Jonson is elegant. He takes the simplest character and situation and repeats it with a virtuosity that hides its redundancy. And when one becomes aware of this redundancy, one can get to the moral heart of the play.

For Remembrance

A. A. DeVITIS

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Several weeks ago I received a newspaper clipping from a friend at the University of Wisconsin reporting the death of Miss Ruth Wallerstein in England, the victim of an automobile accident. Somehow I had never seriously thought of death and Miss Wallerstein; for when I knew her she was already a legend, remarkable, beautiful, and imperishable. I remember the many times I had seen her drive her car over the confusing, angling streets of Madison, and with what awe I had witnessed her impetuous and oftentimes illegal turns into one-way streets and no-exit courts. Miss Wallerstein, I knew, was above the machinery that carried her, for she lived in a finer world than ours.

When I first enrolled in a course under her, I was not disposed to like Miss Wallerstein. I had heard graduate students speak with reverence of her scholarship, her insights, and her appreciation of what was "central" to the humanistic tradition in western life, a subject that seemed so generally known that any brilliancy a scholar might bring to it seemed waste to me. I had heard of her great personal beauty, but beauty to me meant Garbo or Dietrich, so I was not at all prepared for what I saw that first day: a woman of average size wearing a pince-nez over kindly but rather misty eyes, her remarkable gray hair topped by an unusual hat, all feathers and bows. As soon as she began to call the roll I knew that, although I might never understand a word she spoke, I could not drop the course. For Miss Wallerstein possessed the most beautiful voice I have ever heard. I listened to her read from *Hamlet*

many times—the "If ever thou didst hold me in thy heart" passage was her favorite—and I have listened to Gielgud and Evans and Olivier and Neville read it too, but none with the power and magic of Miss Wallerstein. And whenever I see *Hamlet* on the stage, I see Miss Wallerstein in Hamlet's place, and the black tights are becoming to her too. Once a witty female graduate said in my presence, "Look at the figure wasted on that old-scholar!"

In 1949 when I first knew her, Miss Wallerstein was an elegant woman in her fifties. She had been teaching at the University of Wisconsin for over twenty years, and her reputation as a scholar and educator was national. She had written a book on Crashaw in 1935 and was currently involved in a study of the aesthetics of seventeenth-century poetry, published in 1950, which later received the Phi Beta Kappa award for distinguished scholarship. But it was as a teacher that she excelled, and there were many many students who idolized her; and there were as many who thought her vague, abstract, and unrealistic concerning the problems of the graduate student who was interested in accumulating enough facts to pass the preliminary examinations that opened the magic doors to the doctoral dissertation.

My first experiences in her classes were not happy. That she treated her students as equals, that she believed them to know as much as she, to feel as keenly as she did the subtlety of Donne and Marvell, Herrick and Crashaw, Dryden and Milton impressed me only with a keen sense of my own inadequacies. The fact that

a few weeks after the beginning of school she appeared on my "Qualifying Oral" only increased my misery. I could only guess at the answers to the questions she put to me, one after another: "Did John Dryden personally know Milton?" "Then what did he mean when he spoke of tagging Milton's line?" "How does *All for Love* differ from *Antony and Cleopatra*?" "Have you read Marino? Ficino?" "And what is your impression of Plotinus?" and, hopefully, "of Plato?" Surely, I thought, my miserable performance would remain fresh in her mind. But that semester I was Mr. Henderson and although I tried conscientiously to correct the error, Mr. Henderson I remained. The fact that there was no Mr. Henderson in the class, and the fact that I looked anything but a Henderson impressed me keenly. I still wonder whose grade I received, and who received mine.

But Miss Wallerstein was already a legend, and my case was by no means unique. There were rumors that men had drowned themselves in Lake Mendota over love of her; but secretly I felt that the rumors greatly exaggerated a fact: someone may have drowned himself in Mendota, but surely it had been a graduate student, and not for love. And one day I heard a graduate student tell a frightening story of an encounter he had had in the summer with Miss Wallerstein. On one of the hottest afternoons of the year he had seen her pushing her bicycle up the forty-five degree incline of Bascom Hill, and he had offered to push it to the top, an offer which Miss Wallerstein gratefully accepted. At the top of the hill she thanked the young man, and turned the bicycle back in the direction from which they had come. Perhaps feeling that she owed him a hint of an explanation, she said, "I love to ride down the hill and listen to the breeze ruffle my hair." I saw her myself many times on the bicycle, elegantly dressed,

hat, gloves, and all, signaling left and right turns in heavy traffic, a sight to dream of, not to tell. From such incidents the legend grew; and I was witness to many.

I remember the day she walked into her eighteenth-century literature class just as the bell stopped sounding. She moved slowly to the desk. Once the room had fallen into a reverential hush she removed her pince-nez, put her thumb and index finger to the bridge of her nose, rose to toe tip and intoned the first twelve lines of the *Iliad*, in Greek. We were all quite startled. Then she proceeded to quote Dryden's translation of the same lines. When the room had composed itself anew, Miss Wallerstein said in her most beautiful voice, "When I die and go to heaven, I shall stop just inside the pearly gates. And when I hear his voice, I shall turn to my attendant angel and say, 'Take me to John Dryden!'" In that same class on another occasion, while reading *The Rape of the Lock*, Miss Wallerstein stopped in mid-alexandrine and told us of her experience of the night before. She had been awakened from a sound sleep by a tiny explosion. She had looked around her apartment and had discovered nothing amiss. In the morning, on closer examination, she found that an eighteenth-century china teacup had shattered, perhaps because of the heat, or the weather. To Miss Wallerstein the china cup was a symbol of the grace and fragility of the period, and its shattering was to her poetic evidence of the aesthetic refinement of the Age of Pope. I did not then understand her meaning, for I could think only of the Puritans and their excess, Charles II and his. But today when I teach my freshmen *The Rape of the Lock* and come to the line, "To stain her honor, or her new brocade," I think of Miss Wallerstein's shattered teacup; and I tell them what she said.

I remember too the day she was fif-

teen minutes late for class. Everyone was preparing to leave when she rushed in, breathless and indignant, offering a most unusual explanation for her tardiness. Overnight the wild swans had returned to Madison, and Miss Wallerstein had driven to the lake to see them. Fearing that she might be late for school, she had left her car in a No Parking zone, and the police had ticketed her. She—and we shared her anger—had been quite incensed that the officer had not torn up the ticket when he heard her explanation. Perhaps it sounded odd to hear an elegant and matronly woman say that she had parked illegally in order to get a closer look at the wild swans. That day she read Yeats's "The Wild Swans at Coole" to us; and then she went on to explain Yeats's idealism, relating it to the great central tradition of humanistic thought. I have always been grateful to that policeman. On another occasion—it was early spring and cold—Miss Wallerstein had gone swimming off the Union pier to a point several miles beyond. She had startled and been startled by an old man. "I must have appeared a grey-headed old Triton to him," she said with amusement, "as I came out of the water. But that old man had no business being up so early!"

Perhaps her most popular class was *Metrical Principles of English Versification*, a subject in which Miss Wallerstein excelled. One could take the class for one, two, or three hours of credit. For three hours one wrote poems, did the work, and took the tests; for two hours one did the work and took the tests; for one hour one did the work. Although I took the course for one hour I did, secretly, write a poem in the heroic couplets; fortunately I can only remember the first two lines: "As I sat in my room and pondered Ruth, / My tongue kept probing the hole in my tooth." The inspiration was genuine; nevertheless I had a great deal of trouble with the

couplet form. The caesurae especially evaded me in the alexandrines. I couldn't distinguish between the masculine and the feminine caesura, and the epic completely eluded me. As I remember, I had a great deal of trouble with the anapestic lurch too. But metrics was the subject in which Miss Wallerstein was most fluent. The sonnet, Italian and English, rime royal, the couplet, the ode, blank verse, Miltonic or Shakespearean, free verse, dipodic rhythm—all were clear to her, and in part to us. Wyatt and Surrey, Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Marvell, Dryden, Pope; Keats, Tennyson, Yeats, Hopkins, Eliot, Auden, all came under her scrutiny. Miss Wallerstein, I remember, didn't like Shelley, and neither did I; but our reasons were very different: she thought he used too many *P's*; I thought him difficult.

One day she came into the Metrics class and said in her most appealing voice, "I seem to have forgotten my handkerchief . . . and I don't seem to have a Kleenex. . . ."—at which we all began to squirm uncomfortably, wondering whether or not to offer soiled handkerchiefs. ". . . I guess I'll simply have to use my hand. . . ." Miss Wallerstein wanted something with which to clean a record; the player was in the back of the room and no one had seen it. It was during that semester too that a good many of us took "prelims," those magic examinations that open the doors to the doctoral dissertation. The results of the examinations were delivered to those of us who were taking Miss Wallerstein's class just before bell time. "Did you receive something nice in the mail today?" she asked, to which question we all breathed a grateful yes. In the course of the hour Miss Wallerstein asked the young man sitting next to me a question, to which he could only answer, "I'm sorry, I don't know." At which Miss Wallerstein looked thoughtful, sad, and said, "Ah, could we but recall that *A* of a few days ago."

In her poetry class Miss Wallerstein spoke approvingly of T. S. Eliot, the poet, although she could not abide the man because of his anti-Semitic views. For she was proudly Jewish. When Mr. Eliot came up to Madison from Chicago where he was teaching a class, he was feted by the English department faculty who delivered him into the auditorium and practically hoisted him onto the stage. Miss Wallerstein had told us that she wished to hear the lecture, but that she did not wish to sit at the same table with Mr. Eliot. Many of us sat at the rear of the auditorium, hoping to see Miss Wallerstein as she entered; but she failed to arrive before the doors were closed. At the lecture's end we drifted into the lobby and discovered her sitting on a bench—she had listened to the lecture over the PA system. When asked what she thought of Mr. Eliot's talk, she said, "A very interesting lecture, but any one of my graduate students could have done as well." The next day she spoke on Eliot's *Four Quartets*; I have never heard a more brilliant lecture, or more generous praise.

Later on that semester Louis MacNeice came to deliver a lecture, and Miss Wallerstein was delegated to meet him at the train, which duty she performed conscientiously. It was early spring, wet and muddy. Miss Wallerstein whisked the poet off into the Wisconsin hills to look for pasque flowers, getting him back to the auditorium only in time for his lecture. No one could understand why the poet seemed so hostile, until it was pointed out to us that his feet were wet, his nose runny, and that he was badly in need of a drink. But we agreed with Miss Wallerstein: any poet should prefer a pasque flower to a whiskey and soda.

Again, when Allen Tate came to the university to read a paper on the pink parasol of Mme. de Vionnet, we all preferred to hear him read his own poems,

but were too shy to ask. Miss Wallerstein did the asking for us, and Mr. Tate obliged by reading from the manuscript of an as yet unpublished poem which he just happened to have on him.

Once in a seminar Miss Wallerstein assigned us research topics. Mine was comparatively simple; the sources were in English. But a graduate student who had been a captain in the Wacs was asked to do research into some recondite area of neo-Platonic philosophy. Discovering that the only book available in the library was written in Latin, and not knowing anything beyond high school Caesar, she went to see Miss Wallerstein to beg off. When Miss Wallerstein heard that the only book on the subject available was in Latin and that the young lady could not read Latin, she said with great compassion in her voice, "Oh, my dear, don't worry about it. The book has been translated into Greek." Another female graduate student, an elderly lady who had come to graduate school from some small college in one of the Dakotas, took Miss Wallerstein's course that semester too. I remember seeing the lady in the reference room, clutching the edge of her table and nodding determinedly, occasionally muttering to herself, "I wish I were dead." One day she asked Miss Wallerstein about an obscure line in one of Donne's love poems, to which Miss Wallerstein answered automatically, "My dear, the line will mean much more to you when you are older."

It was during that seminar course that I became convinced of Miss Wallerstein's invulnerability. On a dim day, the rain turned to ice just at seminar time. No one expected Miss Wallerstein to turn out and venture up the steep hill. But at five minutes to the hour someone looked out a window. There was Miss Wallerstein carrying a bag full of ashes, strewing them at her feet, to make a passage. She entered the room brightly, removed

a rather icy hat, wiped the steam from her pince-nez, and began to lecture.

That spring I discovered that Miss Wallerstein and I lived on the same bus line. I had gotten into the habit of working late in the library, and taking the ten o'clock bus home; occasionally Miss Wallerstein did the same. The first time we met at the corner, I felt I had to say something more than "Good evening," and after a few minutes of awkward silence, I managed, "Haven't we a lovely moon tonight?" Miss Wallerstein asked with great interest in her voice, "Where?" "Why, right up there," I said, pointing to an enormous yellow disk, heavy through the new-green leaves. Miss Wallerstein looked where I pointed and said, with more compassion than I have ever heard in a human voice, "Why, my dear, that's the clock!" I had

indeed mistaken the Music Hall clock for the moon. And then I remembered that Miss Wallerstein knew all about the phases of the moon. I think from that time on she remembered me.

It is difficult to accept the fact that she is dead. I know her guardian angel had a full-time job. But I am happy that it was in England that she died. She was working on a book on Crashaw when the accident happened, and I believe that the work has been completed by one of her closest friends. I and many, many of her students have her words scrawled in yellowing notebooks, scratched in the margins of books, and they mean more to us as we grow older. And when I think of her, I think of her moving lightly, all knowledge shining, to hold metaphysical discourse with John Dryden. And I envy him all her conversation.

NEWS OF MAGAZINES

WHAT LOOKS LIKE THE FIRST printed American critical symposium on the works of Samuel Beckett appears as the Autumn 1959 issue of *Perspective*, available at \$1 from the *Perspective* office, Washington University, St. Louis 5, Mo.

NEW SCHOLARLY JOURNAL: *A Review of English Literature*, edited by A. Norman Jeffares (Leeds), "may profitably include discussion of literature written in the Commonwealth, the United States and elsewhere," as well as in the British Isles. \$3 a year, 59 New Oxford St., London W.C.1.

VOLUME I, NUMBER I OF *THE Carleton Miscellany* is out, full of the liveliness and literary variety of *Furioso*, which Editor Reed Whittemore used to edit. Address: Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota.

THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST AND for liberal usage in language appear with remarkable cogency in two short articles in the *Atlantic* for February and March: Wilson Follett (editor, novelist) against, and Bergen Evans (teacher, linguist) for. Follett: "Taste is the faculty of criticism, the faculty of intelligent choice; and to it belongs the last word about any given use of language." Evans: "Scholars . . . believe that the only 'rules' that can be stated for a language are codified observations." Suitable for the next dozen essay anthologies.

NEW QUARTERLY OF THE ARTS: *Susurrus* (Box 211, Kenyon College), "Based upon the belief that the younger artist is being strangled to death in the tangled underbrush of contemporary letters, that the stodgy myopia of the academic environment and the self-conscious indifference of the current literary atmosphere is choking artistic expression. . . ." That's more like it. *Aux barricades!*

Round Table

AN APPOINTMENT IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

STEPHEN E. WHICHER

A critic and editor of Emerson (Freedom and Fate, 1953; Selections, 1957; Early Lectures, 1959), Dr. Whicher is a professor at Cornell University.

The following skit was presented at the 1959 Christmas meeting of the English Club of the College of Arts and Sciences of Cornell. Any resemblance to the staff or procedures of any actual English Department is purely incidental.

The scene is a departmental office, much resembling all departmental offices. The chairman—let us call him M.C.T.—is seated at the desk. A colleague enters, carrying a large box. We may call him S.E.W.

T. What's all that? W. These are all the applications to date. (*He sits and puts down his box.*) T. I won't read any more. My God, we've got to start eliminating! Do you realize the MLA is in two weeks? Less—ten days. How many have we got? W. Well, not counting obvious impossibles—I mean like that woman in Amherst who's never published anything and can't even write English—this makes exactly 147. T. 147! Why, we can't even consider all those, let alone interview them. Can't we cut down at all? W. Not much. Maybe that Bowdoin man, Henry Longfellow. T. I thought he had a good publication list. W. A lot of it is pretty minor stuff. *Evangeline*, *King Olaf*, *Hiawatha*—they're not even American. And "Paul Revere's Ride," "The Courtship of Miles Standish"—how specialized can you get? Anyway, he's been doing most of his teaching in the Modern Language departments. T. That might work out. W. But this man—I've a feeling he'll be off on some fellowship every other year and we won't get any work out of him. He says his teaching is a great hand laid on all the strings of his lyre, stopping their vibration. T. That does it. I've heard that before. Longfellow is out. Who else? W. Well, I hate to say it, but I think we'll have to cut out Whicher. I mean John Greenleaf Whicher. T. Surely not him. W. He's too much of a risk. T. But look at his family. And a Colonial man—they're

hard to find. What's the matter with him? W. He's a Quaker. He might not sign a Teacher's Oath. T. Now that's a thought. We don't want a committee in here. Not with the wild men we've got on the staff. There was another like that, wasn't there? W. You mean John Woolman? Yes, he's out too. T. No, it was another name—oh yes, that Harvard man, Ralph something Emerson. Didn't someone say he was a Quaker? W. You're thinking of that letter that called him an "intellectual Quaker." T. That's it. I guess he'd sign, all right. Anyone else? W. I don't quite trust this Frost—though they say he looks out far and in deep. T. Maybe, but I didn't like his record either: he's been moving around too much. We don't want to go through all this again right away. W. His letter says: "I have climbed the hills of view and looked at the world and descended; I have come by the highway home and lo it is ended." T. I don't believe it. We'd never hold him with our salary scale. Anyway, I didn't like his crack about departments. Let him go stop by someone else's woods.

W. Well, that's about it, M.C. The rest all look possible on paper. T. All of them? W. Just about. T. All 143 of them? W. As of this morning's mail. T. I resign. It isn't worth it. W. Come on, M.C., this is serious. You're the resourceful leader-type—think of something. T. How about you? It's your field. W. All right. Let's both think. (*They think. Pause*) T. Sure you didn't miscount them? W. Count them yourself. T. Skip it. (*Pause*) W. Could we—no. No, we couldn't. T. Couldn't what? W. Nothing. We couldn't possibly

do it anyway. T. Look, S.E., we're desperate. What couldn't we do? W. Well—I mean—well, since we're stuck—I mean *really* stuck— T. Come on. W. Couldn't we, well, just *pick* one? T. You mean, just reach in and—pick one? W. Yes. T. And that's it? W. That's it. T. Well, why not? Who's to know? After all, it's only American literature. W. I resent that. T. It's your idea. If you don't like it, think of something else. W. I don't like it, but what else is there? Let's do it. T. All right, go ahead. W. You do it. T. You do it. You're going to have to live with him. W. O.K. Let's see: Brown, Cooper, Crane, H., Crane, S., MacLeish, J. B., Robinson, Smith, Mark Twain—what kind of a name is that?—Williams, Williams, Williams— T. Don't look at the names. Just reach in and pull.

W. O.K. Here he comes. (*The folder falls open. Something rattles on the table.*) T. What's that? W. It's a pencil. T. Yours? (*He picks it up.*) W. No, it's not mine. T. "Kouroo." I've never seen a pencil just like this before. W. Do you suppose this is some kind of salesman? T. Well, look and see. What's his name? W. *Thoreau*. Henry David *Thoreau*. T. *Thoreau*, surely. W. Not where I come from. T. This is New York. If it's *Cornell* it's *Thoreau*. W. Have it your way. Say, I don't remember seeing any of this. There must be some mistake. T. What now? W. Look here. (*He pulls out a large piece of birchbark.*) T. What in the name of sense is that? W. It's his application, I guess. (*Reading*) Yes, that's what it is. He makes his own paper, he says. He says it's better than store paper. T. He's wrong. It's lousy paper. W. He says it has the bloom still on. T. I don't see it. What about this pencil? W. I don't seem to find anything—this is a bit hard to read—oh yes, here it is: "I enclose a pencil I just made. It is the perfect pencil. I will never make another, so I thought you would like to have it." T. Well, his pencils are better than his paper, I'll say that for him. What *have* we got here? Where's he been? What's he done? W. Well, his father's in the graphite business in Massachusetts— T. That explains the pencil— W. He went to Harvard. He reads Latin, Greek, French, and some German, Italian, and Spanish. T. So far, so good. Where'd he do his graduate

work? W. He says he spent a week on the Concord and Merrimack rivers. T. Say that again. W. He spent a week—two weeks, actually—on the Concord and Merrimack rivers. T. I don't get it. You don't suppose he's an alcoholic, do you? W. We can check the letters. There's something here: "I am glad to have drunk water so long. I would fain keep sober always. I would prefer to be intoxicated by the air I breathe." T. That's a bit evasive, don't you think? I mean, why bring it up at all? W. He says he doesn't like coffee or tea and is planning to give up animal food. T. Sounds like a crank. What *does* he eat? W. "Rye"— T. I knew it! W. Wait. "Rye and Indian meal without yeast, potatoes, rice, a very little salt pork, molasses, and salt; and my drink, water." T. There he goes again. W. He lives on rice, mainly. It costs him 27¢ a week to eat. T. The Faculty Club won't like that. W. "I would sometimes eat a fried rat with a good relish, if it were necessary." T. A fried what? W. Rat. R-A-T. That's what it looks like. T. It must be that paper. W. I don't know, M. C. Here he says he once nearly ate a woodchuck. T. How can you *nearly* eat a woodchuck? W. He says we all eat too much.

T. You know something? I'm beginning not to like this fellow. Where's he been teaching? W. A place called Walden. T. Never heard of it. Where is it? W. Near Concord, Mass. On a lake. T. All colleges are on lakes. How big is it? W. He doesn't seem to say. Wait a minute. There's a little place broken off here. It says something about "three chairs." T. Pretty small place, I guess. What's he been getting, I wonder? W. That's all here. He's made this out pretty carefully. It says—no, that can't be right. T. Let's see. "Income, \$36.78." A year, no less! Why, the poor bastard has been living on his savings. No wonder he wants another job! What's he been *doing* for \$36.78 a year? Where does it say about his field? W. Right here. T. "So many autumn, ay, and winter days, spent trying to hear what was in the wind; or waiting at evening on the hill-top for the sky to fall, that I might catch something"— W. He can't have much of a teaching load. T. "For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow-storms and

rain-storms"—Now there's just the trouble with all these young fellows today! No discipline! No sense of purpose! They all want to get into administration right away! W. Take it easy, M.C. We made an agreement, remember? T. All right. What do the letters say? W. Max Lerner says his thought "has a spare and canny strength and a quality of being unfooled." Gene Tunney says, "The spirit of Thoreau lends its luminous wisdom to man and nature whenever they meet." T. Whenever *who* meet? W. Townsend Scudder says, "Thoreau has become one of America's great." T. That's what I was afraid of. All just routine praise. If he's so good why hasn't he got a better job? W. There's more here—Perry Miller—Odell Shepard—Walter Harding. Here's a letter from Ralph Emerson. You know, the intellectual Quaker. T. Now they're recommending each other! Who is this Emerson? Look him up. No, don't bother. W. I don't have to, I remember about him. He had to resign from his first job. Some trouble with the administration. Since then he hasn't had a job, been doing some kind of free-lance writing. He says he would be glad to accept a professorship of rhetoric at some country college but no place has ever asked him. T. A fine reference! Well, what does he say? W. "I commend to you my brave Henry. I am very familiar with all his thoughts—they are my own quite originally drest." T. He's got his nerve. W. "In reading him, I find the same thought, the same spirit that is in me, but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generality." T. And this man expects to teach writing! W. Walter Harding says Thoreau is better than Emerson. He says a lot of people think so. T. I don't doubt it. But how good is that? If he's a writer, what has he written? W. It's on that application somewhere. T. You find it, will you? My eyes are tired.

W. Well, he's written a book about his week on the Concord and Merrimack rivers. T. A whole book? What have they got out there, for God's sake? W. He put a lot of his college themes in it. T. He did, did he? Who published this thing? W. He paid for the printing himself. It's just been remaindered. T. I should hope so. What's

he written lately? W. Let's see. He has an essay called "Walking" and one called "Autumnal Tints" and one called "Wild Apples"—T. I don't mean that stuff. What does he list that for? What's he done that amounts to something? W. Here's an article called "Aulus Persius Flaccus." T. That's more like it. W. That came before the book. T. Must be his M.A. thesis. W. Then he has an unpublished article on Sir Walter Raleigh. T. The critic? W. No, the poet. T. Oh. Too bad. What else? W. He has a book about ready for publication. T. They all say that. What's his subject? W. Walden. T. He must *love* that place. Why does he want to leave? W. He's a little funny about that. Here's all he says: "I want to leave Walden for as good a reason as I came here." T. Damn his impudence! Less and less I like this Thoreau. What's he hiding? Is his wife a lush or something? W. He's not married. T. He isn't eh? (*Thoughtfully*) How old is he? W. In his thirties. T. You don't suppose that by any chance he is one of *those*, do you? W. I was just going to mention, Perry Miller seems to hint something of the kind. T. This looks bad. W. On the other hand, Odell Shepard says Miller doesn't know what he's talking about. T. Just the same, I don't like it. W. Of course, some of these recommenders will say that about almost anyone. You remember the letters from that Stanley Edgar Hyman last year! and from that guy in Montana—Fiddler, Fiedler, some such name. Why don't we write a confidential letter to the president of Walden? He ought to be able—T. (*Decisively*) No. This is just no good. The whole picture is wrong. He's simply not our type. What courses would he teach? What would he do? W. He could always make pencils. T. We've got pencils. And paper too, I'm happy to say. I know we said we'd take this one but we can't do it. The appointment would never go through. We'll have to pick another one.

W. You're the chairman. You pick this one. T. Oh, I don't care any more. Take the last one in the box. W. That one just came. (*Opens it.*) There's nothing here but a paper bag. T. Something tells me—! Go on. Open it. W. (*Opens the bag and shakes the contents onto the table.*) It's grass. T. Grass? W. Grass. T. God help us, an-

other nature boy! Where do they get their degrees, these fellows? W. Here's something written on the bag: "This is the flag of my disposition.—Walter Whitman." T. That settles it. (*Stands up.*) Let's go. W. (*Does the same.*) Where are we going? (*Picks up the box.*) T. There's only one thing to do. W. What's that? T. We'll

take all this down to the IBM machine and instruct it to pick the three best before the MLA. W. Why, of course. Why didn't we think of that before? You're a genius, M.C. T. A good executive knows when to delegate. Now maybe I can finish that Erle Stanley Gardner. (*Exeunt*)

EXAMINING THE EXAMINATION

STEPHEN MINOT

Visiting assistant professor at Trinity College, Connecticut, Mr. Minot is the author of articles on "Teaching the Traditional Essay" (College English, Dec. 1959) and "What a Seminar Is Not" (AAUP Bulletin, Winter 1959).

"That was a good examination, Sir."

The novice instructor smiles and picks up his bluebooks, humming cheerfully. The harried veteran instructor, however, does not smile. He winces. He suspects without looking that the speaker was a second-rate student. Honor students, he has learned, are masters of post-examination melancholy. What *this* student meant, no doubt, was that he was able to fill the gaps in his knowledge with verbiage, leaving the surface highly polished. By "good," the student usually means "untaxing."

If the student's evaluation of an examination is not valid, whose is? Obviously the instructor's. But, to paraphrase a master at this sort of thing, what if the gods disagree? Are we then forced to admit that there is no such thing as a "good examination?" Clearly the profession faces an argument which, if allowed to develop in Socratic fashion, could discredit its very function.

The situation calls for a hard look at three reassuring myths we have built around this thing called an examination. The first myth is that their primary function is to determine ability. The examination, we tell our students, should "separate the sheep from the goats," though just which animal is preferred we never make clear. This establishes a fine absolute value. The definition is confused, however, by

the student who is clearly "full of ability" yet incapable of reflecting this ability in any examination. And what of the inverse: the student whose intellectual horizons are bounded by the four walls of his fraternity who infuriatingly writes a B plus paper? Clearly both sheep and goats have mutated beyond recognition.

Another myth shifts the key word from "ability" to "effort." An examination is "good" when it is an accurate test of just how hard each student is working, a sort of sincerity gauge. "Don't confuse the examination with the I.Q. test," the instructor tells his students, smiling paternally. The smile, however, is gone when the same instructor listens in conference to an E student who, on the strength of No-Doz, studied steadily for sixty-three hours and then wrote a paper which was distinguished by its consistent idiocy. More than likely, his roommate didn't even buy the text and received honors. Just how has the examination rewarded effort or even sincerity?

And then there are those who classify an examination as "good" when the resulting grades fall into some sort of idealized curve. Just why a graph of the results should resemble the contour of a mole hill or a mountain is a little uncertain. Even a professor of English ought to be aware of the fact that the law of averages is not a law

in either a legal or mystical sense. It is a statement of *probability*. There is always the *possibility* that one has drawn a class list dominated by sheep—or goats.

Pushing these myths aside, we face some brutal realities. Most instructors know before the final examination is given what grade he will give each student. In all but the largest lecture courses, he has been forming opinions about each student throughout the term. Further, most instructors consciously or unconsciously doctor final examination grades to fit preconceived evaluations. Those few who correct papers "blind" only admit that doctoring grades is a professional addiction. Occasionally a student may expose a hitherto hidden depth of stupidity or a vein of previously buried genius. Comforting as these rare discoveries are, they are accompanied by the uneasy feeling that perhaps the wording of the examination was at fault. The average instructor in the field of English literature places his greatest faith in his own subjective evaluation and judges the worth of his examination by how closely it verifies this evaluation.

Once again we face the question: what is a good examination? The answer can only be found by asking a second question: what would be lost if we didn't give them at all?

First, the average student would make little effort to grasp the day-to-day material with intellectual vigor. He would, for example, attend the lectures with that sloth-like stupor with which most adults listen to sermons. The assignments, if read at all, would be handled in the way many adults wander through an historical novel.

Second, the student would make no effort at the end of the term to pull the material together, to make order out of what has been presented in a series of hour-long installments. He would be left with a collection of fragments, a Bartlett without an index.

Finally, the poor student would not be convinced of his intellectual poverty. His grade could be excused on the basis of professorial prejudice and the blame in this way conveniently externalized. Equally,

the talented student would be deprived of several rewards: the realization that he has achieved some measure of intellectual maturity, an inner pride in his newly developed skills, and the fine sense of having entered a new world of experience.

Students are convinced that examinations determine teacher-evaluation and hence the grade. They will continue to be convinced of this whether they are told so or not. This is as it should be. But there is no reason for the teacher to use this myth as his guide when he begins the task of constructing a new examination. He would be on safer ground if he checked each section of his examination against each of these three questions:

(1) Will it convince the student that in college neither the assignments nor the lectures should be swallowed whole for undigested regurgitation on demand? In other words, is the question worded in such a way as to make a student re-evaluate his method of handling the day-by-day work?

(2) Will it force a student to see the course as a totality? (If a question can be answered on the basis of a single lecture or a single unit in the reading, it has failed to provide this second function.)

(3) Will the poor student be made aware of his intellectual poverty by what he has to write? (Ideally, the student should make this discovery even before he receives the grade. A vague question often tends to convince the worst student that he is a genius.) And conversely, will the talented and well prepared student be able to take intellectual flight? (A question which is too tightly defined will limit this student's ingenuity and leave him with an unfortunate combination of frustration and boredom.)

If the answer is "yes" to these three questions, such problems as a reflection of ability, recognition of effort, and a realistic grade distribution curve are likely to be solved. These are helpful by-products of the "good examination." But the examination is not "good" because it was designed primarily to give the instructor information about his students. It is "good" because it was designed to give the student a fuller awareness of the intellectual process.

EXAMINATIONS IN LITERATURE

ZATELLA R. TURNER

Associate professor at Virginia State College, the author has published My Wonderful Year (1939), an account of her study abroad.

On the day that I received my December (1958) *College English*, I had on my desk a set of examination papers in Literature and Drama. Although I have not succumbed to the popularity of the objective test for obvious reasons, I have been tempted to do so "always for the next test." Most of the students whom I teach in B. E. 111, as the above-mentioned course is popularly known, are from all areas of the college and are required to take the course; therefore they enter with varying degrees of interest. Consequently, I am challenged both in my presentation of the course and in my preparation of examinations. When students are convinced that B. E. 111 is not an exercise in memorization, but is as provocative as science and as problematical as psychology, one can observe with satisfaction the students' becoming more and more interested in literature as they are able to express their opinions, substantiating them in the framework of the selection.

I was indeed pleased to read Dr. Ruoff's article "Examinations in Literature," for he confirms what I believe and have practiced in my classes, sometimes to the dismay of the students until they have become oriented and can look upon a course in literature as a rewarding experience.

I shall cite two questions from the examination which I was grading. A question

on Pascal's *Pensées*—"What patterns in our present-day living may be based on this statement, 'When we are too young, we do not judge well; so, also, when we are too old'?"—afforded students an opportunity to review many of our cultural patterns. The examples given in the discussion ran the gamut from our arbitrary retirement age to the minimum age for voting, the draft age, the age for the presidency of the United States, the age limitations for entering the various professions, the age restrictions for various jobs and promotions therein. Another question based on the Declaration of Independence asked the students to defend one of the predominant controversial statements of today in the much-quoted paragraph, "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal. . . ." The range and variety of the answers gave evidence that the students had grasped the full import of the present-day significance of the Declaration of Independence. The students' reactions to the thought-provoking questions substantiated Dr. Ruoff's thesis, "For if examinations in literature are to be something more than drilling and grilling, they must take the young scholar beyond conclusive facts and accepted doctrine, and forward on the hard but immensely rewarding road toward manifold and ever-changing truths."

EMORY'S ILA: A NEW DOCTORATE

GEORGE ROSS RIDGE

Dr. Ridge, an assistant professor of modern foreign languages at Georgia State College, is the author of The Hero in French Romantic Literature (1959) and of numerous articles, poems, and short stories.

Our graduate programs are so organized as to prevent cross-communication. Efforts at reform are few. Yet here and there programs granting the Ph.D. in a specialty plus humanities have been established. Their purpose is to free the scholar through cross-disciplinary training.

Such is the aim of the Institute of the

Liberal Arts, founded at Emory University in 1952. ILA, as it is called, is a separate interdisciplinary program, not an adjunct to a department. It strikes down arbitrary boundaries in an attempt to achieve fuller communication. It does not supplant specialization, but rather places each field on a common cultural spectrum.

Faculty and students in ILA come from the humanities and social sciences to study common problems from varied standpoints. How could we fully communicate otherwise? In separate departments we were working more often than not in tight, closed, little systems. In desperation the faculty formed the Institute and students wandered in from across the country.

Depth is not sacrificed for breadth, for ILA's doctorate is in a specialty plus the humanities. It requires at least a master's degree for entrance, and many students have three degrees and most have three or four years of full-time graduate work before matriculation. Only a sense of great need could draw these students after so much time in graduate school.

My own experience may be instructive. I enrolled after taking degrees at Chattanooga, Emory, and Harvard, for the standard program of two years of seminars and directed study plus the dissertation: a year seminar called Studies in the Western Tradition; a two-year seminar, The Liberal Arts; quarter seminars, Systems of Knowledge, Comparative Literature, and Impact of Graeco-Roman Culture upon Early Christianity, American Institutions, and The Order of Human Values. I also took departmental work in French and English. In 1956 I took my comprehensive examinations, for no other tests are given. In December 1957 my dissertation, *The Romantic Hero in France*, was approved by my committee and outside readers. (All ILA dissertations must be approved by two authorities outside Emory.)

These are the facts. More important is the question: Why did I enter ILA and what did I get out of it?

Dissatisfaction led me to ILA. Eight quarters of departmental graduate work had not taught me criticism, esthetics, in-

tellectual history, or even a good methodology. My isolated, individual courses, even in a program like comparative literature, had little unity. I felt uneducated, unable to communicate. How could I, then, communicate with my students and colleagues?

ILA equipped me with order and methodology. First, it provided order through the intellectual history of the Western World. Second, it made me aware of values as never before, and showed me how the liberal arts are inextricably related, and what place literature had in the cultural spectrum of Western society. These tools made specialization more meaningful. I was no longer a specialist by amputation, stripping literature from areas it could not logically avoid. I became aware of literature as a vital force.

I do not claim ILA is a perfect program. It did help me learn the necessity for and methodology of cross-communication by emphasizing the unity of humanistic knowledge. Anything less is, regrettably, an ultimate breakdown in full communication.

Its fate is uncertain. While trying to avoid the pitfalls of specialization, a program like ILA is trying at once to train the student in a specialty and educate him in intellectual history on the graduate level. The task is great and time-consuming. Yet the effect of ILA training is healthful. The program affords a pooling of intellectual resources which no student could find in a single department. By design it is the Institute of the Liberal Arts—the freeing or liberating arts, the goal of which is to produce the free man. The key is communication. No man is free if he cannot talk to others. And the ILA student, whatever his limitations, is to this extent a free man. He has access to areas of knowledge formerly closed to him.

AUTOMATION IN THE CLASSROOM

ALAN CASTY

A teacher at Santa Monica City College, Mr. Casty is the editor of Writers in Action: 28 Essays (1957) and The American Film and Its Critics (in preparation).

Some months ago the *New York Times Book Review* brought word of a new book entitled *The Power of Prayer on Plants* (to be hailed, no doubt, as a sequel to the

best-selling *Pray Your Weight Away* of a few seasons back.) Meanwhile, out in Southern California students in classrooms at Compton College were reported shoot-

ing out the picture tubes of the closed-circuit television sets in their classrooms with air-gun pistols. This bizarre juxtaposition of news items might well serve as a kind of transcontinental metaphor of the problems that today beset the human mind and spirit in our land.

I shall leave the implications of our latest contribution to theology to those who are more familiar with original sin and rhododendrons. It is the educational side of this two-headed monster of modernism that will concern me here. Although the tales of picture tube shooting may be apocryphal (it is difficult to separate truth from legend once these things get started), the reality of what else has been happening at this junior college on the outer fringes of Los Angeles is, unfortunately, well established and provides a disturbing counter-statement to some of the widely huckstered testimonials about the use of television in the classroom to solve the problems created by the shortage of classrooms, the shortage of teachers, and the shortage of funds.

With increasing frequency, and with due reverence and awe, educators, business and government leaders, and, of course, television executives have all been turning to television in the classroom as the tranquilizer for our educational anxieties—just as soon as we can get the bugs ironed out production-wise, of course. For here is a perfect American solution: a mixture of know-how and cost accounting, gadgetry and efficiency. And it can all be evaluated statistically on IBM machines to prove that "achievement" has not suffered, that the learning curves, the percentile pattern groupings, and the median rates of retention are every bit as standardized as ever.

Nevertheless, I would like to enter a reactionary demurrer to the chorus of acclaim for the wonders of television in the classroom. It seems to me a disturbing paradox that, as it has so often been approached and as it has been approached at Compton College, television in the classroom is not the cure, but rather another symptom of the very blight itself. And that blight is not, at base, money and not overpopulation—but mechanization, standardization, sterilization of the individual intellect. It is not always so easily summed up by the label anti-intellectualism, for it is frequently,

and more dangerously, quasi-intellectualism, a confusion as to what intellectualism is and how it can be nurtured. A confusion as to what education is—even when we all vehemently and patriotically protest (too much) that we love and respect education, that it is the backbone of a democratic society, the chief weapon in the Cold War, etc., etc.

William Faulkner's Popeye, the robot of anti-intellectual, anti-spiritual modernism, is not our spectre here. For even more frightening are those future robots of quasi-intellectualism, those students sitting passively in darkened classrooms, staring hopefully but dully at the cold glow of the television screens, while monitors patrol their perimeters on rubber-soled shoes, checking the roll, keeping them, in the lower grades, from clubbing each other, and, in the upper grades, from reading or playing cards—a generation of students passing through the production lines of education untouched by teachers' hands; pasteurized; homogenized. Products of the triumph of utility over the inner life.

These TV wraiths, their eyes bloodshot and blank, are not only a vision of the future. They have already materialized in Southern California, where, as Karl Shapiro remarked in his poem *Hollywood*, "... all superlatives come true / and beauty is marketed like a basic food." To which we may now add education.

Television in the classroom at Compton College, it must be pointed out, is not a test conducted under carefully, and unrealistically, controlled conditions. It is an established part of the regular school curriculum, and as such might serve as an example of what can happen when test-tube educational theories meet the exigencies of real classrooms, administrators, and Boards of Education. It was started (marketed), Compton's president (now ex-president) Paul Martin, admitted, as an economy measure, principally to ease the tax burden on local taxpayers. With it, Martin felt he could double enrollment without hiring a single new teacher. Since public junior colleges, of which there are more than half a hundred in California, are in great part financed by their local school districts, with additional aid from the counties and from the state, the California Taxpayers

Association heartily applauded the Compton answer to school financing problems.

To begin with, the program—hastily conceived and crudely executed—included freshman courses in Psychology, Algebra, and English. More, many more, were planned. In all, the touchstone was seemingly commercial television's guiding advertising principle of the cheapest cost per thousand viewers. The teachers presented an entire course's lectures to a 16 mm. movie camera, operated by men with no background in educational communication. These filmed lectures were then sent over the closed-circuit network to TV sets in the classrooms. A single lecture was usually sent to four or five classrooms, with about 40 students in each, but it would, of course, be possible to increase the number of rooms or students when the need arises. The students' only human contact was a monitor, known as "The Winged Supervisor," one for all the rooms on each network. The monitor checked the roll and attempted, often unsuccessfully, to maintain order and interest. An observer from the California Teachers Association reported that he sat in on one class for days and was never questioned or approached by a monitor.

The California Teachers Association protested the continuation of the program under these conditions. The state of California moved to withdraw state funds from all classes at Compton which did not have a teacher present in each classroom. The College's own faculty council even called for a halt. But President Martin stood firm. Rejecting the faculty's demands, rejecting an offer to conduct a controlled experimental evaluation of the courses, he vowed their continuation and extension. In response to the state's economic sanctions he assigned teachers to classrooms on their off-periods, secured the construction of a special television classroom building, with air-conditioning and no windows. He argued, moreover, that if he did not believe his program was providing superior (as well as inexpensive) instruction, he would not continue it.

But the pressures and counter-pressures finally reached cyclone intensity and Martin resigned. For the time being, however, his television courses are continuing. After all this expense, nobody quite knows what

to do with them. And for the time being, the special television classroom building stands unused, a monument to the cheapest cost per thousand. Nobody quite knows what to do with it either.

Granting that the excesses and ineptness of the Compton situation need not be considered as generic for all TV instruction, it is still an instructive symbol (though of course not for the students) for pointing up the dangers that are always at least latent in relying on organization and technology to solve all of our problems, in mistaking efficiency for education.

There is more to education than the production of a certified number of skills and a few varied kits of facts. There is more to the making of a human being than the statistical abstracts of achievement tests. There is, for one thing, culture, which Alfred North Whitehead in his essay *The Aims of Education* has defined as "activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. . . ." And probably one of the most dangerous.

Thus the means by which the student gains his scraps of information are just as important as the ends, the accumulated data; it is the personal and social matrix which surrounds the facts that makes the education. It takes human beings to make human beings; we cannot abdicate this job to the machines.

We cannot produce active thinkers—stimulated to continuing growth and interest—out of passive screen-watchers. The very medium itself shapes a regimented, depersonalized situation that is already far too prevalent in our society, one that it should be the job of education to disperse, not to congeal. We cannot produce receptiveness and responsiveness without the living presence, the personality of a teacher. Nor can we teach the student to relate himself to beauty, to culture, or to others by a process that asks him to relate to nobody.

Combating the impersonality of modern society is as vital a function as any other for education and educators. Any technique that negates this function, no matter what other functions or economies it does

provide, is only self-defeating. As is too much emphasis on *technique* as such. Any technique. Here is where the rush to TV in the classroom can be seen to fit neatly—almost as a ready-made extension outlet—into the overall pattern of teaching advocated by so many of our educators—with its passion for standardized techniques and devices, for statistical psychology and systems, for Methods. In short, for anything that avoids that personal moment of truth when a single individual tries to communicate to another a subject that he understands and loves.

All of this is not to deny that television can be a useful technique in the classroom, can, in fact, be an important, valuable, vista-opening tool. But as a supplement to, not a substitute for, a teacher. This is also not to deny the realities that must be faced, must even be compromised with—the shortages of classrooms, of teachers, and of money. But the compromise to alleviate

these shortages—whether it be television or any other “realistic” technique—had better not produce, in their stead, a shortage of truly educated human beings. Not unless we want a generation of graduates with television-eyes, bloodshot and blank. As William Jennings Bryan did not say, but might have, if he had been crusading for free minds instead of free silver—“You shall not pacify our students upon a tiny screen of silver.”

SOURCES

Information on the Compton College classroom television situation was obtained from an investigator's report to the California Teachers Association-Southern Section Special Committee on Junior College Problems, proceedings of the California Teachers Association-Southern Section Salary Committee, published accounts in *The Los Angeles Times*, and statements of Compton College faculty members.

About Our Authors

KENNETH E. EBLE

Let's raise our glass to Frederick Mu,
T. C. U.
two books, six poems,
major articles, and minor,
M. A., North Carolina.

And dip our pens to Douglas Dee,
Yale degree,
reviews concise and perspicacious,
critiques in all the likely places,
writes like blazes.

In lieu of cash, in place of glory,
record the academic's story:
A.B., M.A., Ph.D.,
Co-editor,
An
Anthology.

For every writer's lucubration,
An *explication de publication*.
Add to my string:
... poem, casual, *College Eng.*

Councilletter

FACING THE BASIC ISSUES: A THREEFOLD APPROACH

JOSEPH MERSAND

As 1959 President of NCTE, Dr. Mersand delivered the following address at the Council-MLA meeting in December 1959. Chairman of the English Department at Jamaica (N. Y.) High School, he is also a Lecturer at Queens College, City College, and New York University Summer Session.

Since the publication and distribution of *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English*, some 60,000 members of the four sponsoring organizations have read, discussed, praised, and criticized this document. I have been informed that a number of NCTE affiliates will use this statement as the basis of their spring conferences. At least one area—Florida—has applied for a grant to try out an hypothetical articulated program in which some of the basic issues may be resolved. It might be safe to say that within recent years in our profession, perhaps no other document has been so widely disseminated for purposes of discussion.

The participants of the conference which produced this document envisaged not only this wide dissemination and discussion, but several immediate kinds of activity that the individual teacher, the English Department, the professional organizations, and the foundations can engage in. It would be difficult to estimate the effect of the document on the 60,000 teachers who have already received it, or how many individual teachers have begun to put into practice some of the elementary suggestions made on page 14 under the section, "What the Individual Teacher Can Do." It shall be my humble purpose to indicate what three types of English teachers can do to solve some of the problems raised by *The Basic Issues*; and these are the three types of English teacher that I have been: secondary (thirty years); seventeen years as a Department Head; college (four years); teacher training (five summer sessions). Knowing the situation at these three levels, I may perhaps be more sympathetic with those who find it rather difficult to change.

I should like to emphasize my own words, *knowing the situation*, because so many writers on education in general, and English education in particular, apparently do not know the situation. For example, Jacques Barzun in *The House of Intellect* blithely summarizes liberal arts education with:

This is not to say that the best liberal arts colleges do not achieve remarkable results as remedial institutions. In four years they manage to reawaken the high school graduate narcotized by the special dullness of the eleventh and twelfth grades.¹

The anonymous author of the article, "The Community of the Campus," in the special supplement on *The American Imagination* of the *London Times Literary Supplement* quotes these lines from Barzun, and this is his *only* direct quotation in his entire article.²

How Mr. Barzun can speak with any authority on what is happening in the hundreds of liberal arts colleges, or what is happening in the 11th and 12th years in the 20,000 secondary schools of America I have yet to discover. Yet this lack of direct, first-hand, or even acceptable third-hand information does not prevent his remarking: "Perhaps the abandonment of grammar, which has come about in the wake of the new scientific linguistics is too negative to be called a means, but it fitly represents the flight from articulateness."³

I have yet to discover his factual basis for decrying the abandonment of grammar,

¹Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect* (1959), p. 117.

²"The American Imagination," *Times Literary Supplement* (6 Nov. 1959), p. xix.

³*The House of Intellect*, p. 139.

FOR J. N. HOOK



On September 1, 1960, J. N. Hook completes his term as Executive Secretary. As one way of recognizing publicly his many services to the National Council during the past seven years, we submit the following tributes by individuals with whom he has served on the Executive Committee.

In considering Nick's years with the Council, we might look back to 1953, with approximately half the membership we have today, without ownership of the journals, with a home to be established and not even a dream of ownership. My one fear now is that with only writing and teaching to do, our Secretary will have difficulty filling his days.

JOHN GERBER

President, 1955

Nick Hook was the most difficult man to work with I have ever known. Or maybe, before any hackles start to rise, I should put it another way. No man ever made me work harder. I was on the Executive Committee for four years, and I doubt that out of those 1,461 days there were more than a score when—thanks to Nick's constant ministrations—I was able to forget the National Council of Teachers of English. I found, for example, that because he always had his facts right, I had to worry about having mine right—a wearing responsibility. I found that because he was always anticipating coming programs and events, I had continually to give thought to the future—a wearying task. I found that because he was always thinking in vast terms about the Council and the profession, I constantly had to raise my sights—a completely debilitating procedure. Paradoxically, the only thing I found upsetting about all this was that it was not upsetting. For Nick was not only the most persistent and effective prod imaginable, but also the most modest and amiable and engaging. We shall all remember his term as a time of great work and great inspiration.

LUELLA B. COOK

President, 1956

During all but one of the seven years I served on the Executive Board, Dr. Hook was Executive Secretary. Working with him, I came to admire greatly his calm, smooth efficiency, his sustained good-humor, his practical good sense, and his loyalty both to the Council and to the profession.

Important decisions were made during the period. First there was the important problem of planning—at Nick's own request—for his retirement in 1960, the year that is now upon us. There was the problem of deciding the site for the Council's permanent headquarters. Both problems touched Nick personally, but during the long discussions of policy and procedure there was never the slightest break in the objective manner which I have since come to associate with all Council deliberations.

It is customary to say on the retirement of an able person whom you admire: "No one can take his place." And in a sense this is true of the person whose service to the Council we now honor. But in another, perhaps more important sense, it seems to me that the finest thing we can say about our retiring Executive Secretary is that he has made it possible for another able person to take his place. He has indeed built well, and the Council is the stronger for the firm structure he has reared during his years in office.

HELEN K. MACKINTOSH

President, 1957

My first face-to-face meeting with J. N. Hook was that evening in Detroit at the opening of the 1954 Conference. His was the interesting and challenging assignment as the new Executive Secretary to review in historical perspective the high spots in the life of the National Council since its beginnings in 1911.

During my four years on Executive Committee, I found many evidences of Dr. Hook's farsightedness. Particularly would I mention his vision in persuading the Committee to analyze and visualize the needs of the Council for a permanent home, a goal that is about to be realized. His interest in the summer tours represented an

opening wedge for the development of international relationships with teachers of English the world around, a development which lies probably just ahead in the future. But no tribute would be complete without mentioning his qualifications as a good friend, and as a fine human being.

BRICE HARRIS

President, 1958

Nick Hook has come to me in three stages. In the late Nineteen Thirties I knew him as the tall, quiet, diligent young man who haunted the Library stacks at Illinois and whom we called **Nick** despite the fact that his real name seemed to be **Julius**. In the middle Forties, after five years at another institution, he returned to Illinois where it was my good fortune (because I did not do the job very well) to turn over to him the job of counselling the master's candidates in English teaching. In the early Fifties, now myself at another institution, I attended the post-session meetings (1952) of the Council's Executive Committee as Vice-Chairman of the College Section. The search for a new Executive Secretary was on, and Nick Hook's name was topping the list. It was during this last stage, his seven years in the Council Office, that I came to know the real Nick Hook. Scholar-teacher, executive, tactician, master of finesse, noble friend and astute counsellor to English teachers in America, Nick has fashioned his own monument. Fortunately for us, he is not going to be allowed to use it for the next twenty years because most of us will doubtless continue to hound him for advice and help as we have for the last seven.

JOSEPH MERSAND

President, 1959

J. N. Hook is that rare combination of scholar, teacher, and administrator who is more often met in the textbooks on administration than in real life. In addition, he has an unerring tact, a deep understanding of human nature, and a firm grasp of organizational problems. I first heard of Nick Hook through his fine work on the Illinois English Bulletin, which he edited so brilliantly. Then I began to know his textbooks—in grammar and composition, in literature, in methods. Whatever he engaged in, he managed to do with excellence. Thanks to his complete grasp of every aspect of the Council's business, he has made the task of the recent presidents a happy experience.

Finally, it has been a rare privilege to know him as a person. I have seldom met any one who was so right so many times and in so many ways.

RUTH G. STRICKLAND

President, 1960

The last few years have seen professional growth in many areas but none more impressive than the growth of the National Council of Teachers of English. Under the leadership of Nick Hook, our expansion in membership and in financial solidarity has exceeded anyone's dream. It is unusual to find a substantial scholar and professional leader also a genius in the economic and business realm, but unquestionably Nick has this rare combination. For this we honor him, and for the service these talents have brought to the Council we are deeply grateful to him.

Those of us who have been privileged to know Nick more intimately through the relationships of the Executive Committee see him also as a generous, unassuming person who remains in the background of the Committee's deliberations, guiding, enriching, and expanding our factual knowledge, quietly bringing us back to the problem at hand when we get off the track, and patiently following through to see that needed decisions are made. All of us have been enriched through the experience of working with him.

W. WILBUR HATFIELD

Secretary-Treasurer,
1919-1953

The first Executive Secretary of the NCTE was chosen after thorough search and careful thought. He was not only to assume the duties of the secretary-treasurer, including direction of the headquarters but, more important, he would make many decisions which had formerly cluttered the time of presidents and executive committees. If he had imagination coupled with sound judgment, he might initiate many improvements. In the public mind he would to an unusual extent stand for the organization. He might do irreparable harm, or make possible a giant step forward. The swift and continued increase of NCTE services, the astounding growth of the organization itself, and the expansion of its contacts are evident to us all.

We know "Nick" Hook well enough to feel that in the pleasure of difficult achievement and still more in the realization of his contribution to the improvement of mankind he has found full compensation for his strenuous efforts and personal sacrifices. Nick must know that he is greatly admired, and probably is little touched by that. We want him to know he is **loved; this, he will love.**

HARLAN M. ADAMS

President, 1953

It was a pleasure and an honor to be the first president to see Nick Hook become the Executive Secretary. Wilbur Hatfield had carried the load of volunteer, part-time secretary for most of the life of the Council. The organization had become established as a significant professional body in American education. The future was full of promise; the ideas for expanded services were numerous; the need for a full-time executive was obvious. A Council Committee had scoured the country and the man of the hour was, fortunately, willing to assume the responsibility.

We had projected, as Council goals in 1953, four proposals: (1) that we promote Council growth, (2) that we stimulate cooperative group activity, (3) that we keep the public informed, and (4) that we provide adequate executive management. When Nick Hook "became" the fourth proposal we were firmly launched toward success in the other three. The facts, the records, the statistics amply document "our" (his and the Council's) achievement of these goals. With "60 by 60" he has surpassed his own motto. We wish him Godspeed as he leaves us with a challenging bench-mark.

LOU LaBRANT

President, 1954

To set a professional pattern for the work of a paid secretary to the Council is no easy task, but when Nick became Executive Secretary he had to do far more than plan a program. He came to us at a critical time.

Fire had driven the Council to temporary quarters in Chicago, but the offices were to move and establish headquarters in Champaign. For weeks work was divided: old routines in Chicago; finding and equipping a new place in Champaign. Just how Nick rested while driving between Champaign and Chicago has never been explained.

There was more than mere moving. The old staff, left in Chicago, had to be suitably paid; the new staff selected. The larger Champaign space suggested new and sometimes expensive equipment. Decisions were sometimes difficult.

The high school and college journals belonged to Wilbur Hatfield, who had shared office expense with the Council. Because editing was now to be done outside the main office, financial details had to be worked out and contracts written for ultimate purchase of the journals.

Despite confusions and pressures, Nick supported and clarified my work as president with almost daily letters. How, I do not know, but I was grateful.

although he makes it plain to me that there are some peculiarities in his own grammatical training demonstrated as in this statement: "Discussing criticism with friends and some brilliant young men, the subject of D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* came up."⁵ Any one of my 9th grade students would recognize the dangling participles.

Such statements about aspects of the teaching of English are by no means rare in the public press, as I have already pointed out elsewhere.⁶ What I should like to do is to present facts and experiences which may help us to resolve some of our basic issues.

I. WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Basic Issues, 12-19, for example, are related to the teaching of written composition. These issues are:

- No. 12. How should writing be taught?
- No. 13. What kind of knowledge should the student have about the structure of the English language, and how can such knowledge, at various levels, be used to improve his ability to write well?
- No. 14. What is the relation between learning to write and the reading of imaginative literature?
- No. 15. Could national standards for student writing at the various levels be established, and what would be their value?
- No. 17. What effect does class size have upon the quality of training in reading and writing?
- No. 18. What effect does the teacher's work load have on the quality of the student's achievement in English?
- No. 19. What are the potential contributions of modern technology to the teaching of English?

How well are we teaching written composition, and what can be done about it? The criticism of the teaching of written composition has been a constant factor in our English program and is one fact that Jacques Barzun and I share in common. From the 1870's on, when Harvard introduced the written composition as one qualifying element for college entrance, to the recent revival of plans by the College Entrance Examination Board to introduce an

essay on its examinations—there has been this derogatory criticism. Whether our secondary and college students are writing better or worse than their older brothers and fathers would be difficult to say, but the strong criticism of student writing today is clear to anyone who wishes to obtain opinions.⁷ For example, from 400 correspondents, more recommendations were made to improve written composition than for any other area of English. Since this has been discussed in my *Attitudes toward English Teaching, 1958-1959*, I shall not repeat myself here. What you all want to know is not what the complaints are, but what can we all do about it.

In the first place, we must all work hard and unceasingly to reduce the teacher load of the secondary English teacher from his present 175-200 students a day to at least the 100 a day recommended by Conant, and long before, by William J. Dusel of San Jose State College. In the words of Henry Chauncey of the Educational Testing Service: "The average English teacher meets 175 students daily in five classes. If he should assign one paper a week in each class, he would then spend four hours a night seven nights a week and most of Saturday and Sunday afternoons just correcting papers."

Let us face the fact squarely: teachers with 175-200 students a day cannot evaluate a composition a week. We might just as well also face the fact that it will be some time before a high school English teacher's load will be reduced to 100 pupils in a four-period day. What, then, can be done? Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Improve the teaching of composition in the methods courses.
2. Seek ways of introducing para-teaching personnel into the secondary schools to assist the already overburdened teachers with such minor details as comma-hunting, searching for sentence fragments, etc.
3. Emphasize, at all levels, the importance of composition evaluation for content first, for clarity and elegance of expression, and for correct mechanics last.

⁵See my *Attitudes toward English Teaching, 1958-1959* (NCTE, 1959), pp. 142-149.

⁷Henry Chauncey, "The Plight of the English Teacher," *Atlantic*, CCIV (Nov. 1959), 123.

⁶*The House of Intellect*, p. 226.

⁷"English Meets the Challenge," *College English*, XXI (April 1960), 409-415.

We have too many comma-hunters and too few true evaluators of composition in our schools. It takes very little training to detect a misplaced comma; but it takes a mature critical judgment to evaluate a piece of writing.

4. Dignify the importance of written composition by making students aware of its importance for self-expression and for success in any and every vocation. It is not irrelevant to this discussion that many large business firms are employing persons at high salaries to teach their executives how to write their professional reports succinctly, clearly, and cogently.

In the words of Professor W. W. Watson, Head of the Physics Department at Yale: "I have some younger physics colleagues who obviously write with difficulty. They are promising scientists who love to work in the laboratory but they are laggards in writing papers that describe their results. But what good are research reports unless they are properly described in a well-written report?"⁴

5. Provide time for personal conferences as often as possible between students and teachers to discuss writing that has been submitted.

One of the happiest memories of the students of Charles Townsend Copeland, according to his biographer, is of his practice of hearing his students read their papers. One such student wrote:

On the occasion of my first conference he sat staring, out of an open window as I read. In the beginning I felt as though I were reading to emptiness outside the window, that none of my "gems" were being heard. I soon discovered that I was woefully mistaken. My "gems" were being considered, most of them condemned. I was told that they were bad, and why they were. I was made to see that the first approach to writing lay in humility, the second in honest sweating, not the arrogant confidence possessed by most undergraduate would-be *litterateurs*. At the same time I began to see where the honest, unconsidered portions of the theme were better, and again why. All this in little comments which I had to jot down in the margin.

⁴Quoted by John F. Schereschewsky, Director, Rumsey Hall School, 33rd Annual Meeting of Secondary Education Board, N. Y., 6 March 1959; quoted with his and Dr. Watson's permission.

At the end of the conference I took from Copey's dictation his final opinion; and from that I learned the following things: First, that he was as sympathetic with all my efforts as I was myself, that he understood what I was trying to do and how the doing hurt. Second, that he was as humble in criticism as he made me feel I ought to be in learning to write, that he was living the helper to my individual needs and giving me a great deal of himself in doing so—that he was not dictating his opinions, and respected my views, if I was able to offer any proof of their validity.

He was always alive to the change and thirst for change in undergraduate character, and where he did not agree was able to sympathize. I began to realize his amazing freshness of mind and his understanding of undergraduate ambitions. In what would appear to be his narrowing confinement in the Yard, he has drunk so long of the spirit of youth, and so deep, that it has enlarged his soul. Copey will never be old.⁵

Can you imagine any one of our students feeling the same way after he has received his paper from us, mascaraed and be-rouged with our official markings?

6. Influence administrators, particularly at the high school level, to relieve English teachers from such humiliating assignments as toilet patrol, cafeteria supervision, and building patrol, to permit them to confer, however briefly, with students on their written work.

7. Influence administrators to provide rooms where English teachers may confer with students on written work. A hallway or a section of a noisy cafeteria or study hall is no place to induce quiet conferences on such matters as improving written composition work.

8. Make opportunities for seeing written work in print, so that students will realize that writing implies a readership, and that good writing achieves a more appreciative and impressed readership.

A composition without readers is as meaningless as a cantata without singers or a string quartet without players. It must be read to be truly effective, and read by some one in addition to the harried, hurried and harassed English teacher.

⁵From Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, *Charles Townsend Copeland*, quoted by Dwight Durling and William Watt, *Biography: Varieties and Parallels* (1941), pp. 442-443.

9. Inspire commitment to writing. What I mean by commitment to writing may be illustrated by the following example cited by Professor Marjorie Carpenter of Stephens College at the 24th Annual Conference of the Educational Records Bureau on 29 October, 1959 in New York City. She related:

Empirical studies point to the conclusion that students even acquire greater skills in such a specific subject as English composition if they are motivated to write clearly about a matter for which they develop concern. One attempt to attack the negative value of prejudice and substitute for it the value of understanding and respect for individuals illustrates this point.

In a six-week's unit, one of the projects included instructions to students to write a paper in which they described why they did not like a particular student on campus. It was required that they be as specific as possible in stating their reasons so that the instructor would have no difficulty in understanding the "undesirable" characteristics. After the papers were handed in, the members of the class were told that they were to become better acquainted with these students and at the end of the term write a paper re-evaluating the person described in the first paper. The final paper, it was made clear, was not to be graded on whether or not they had changed their attitude, but rather on the clarity of expression involved in the statement of the process they had used in becoming better acquainted, and the quality of expression in the re-evaluation.

Students reported that this was a difficult writing assignment. They learned a lot about the skills involved in accurate use of language. They also learned a lot about bases for personal prejudice and the need for improving one's personal relations if any kind of clear communication can exist for any two people. Many students added spontaneous expressions about the value of the whole assignment to them. They learned the intellectual value of objectivity, they learned the value of good human relations as a basis for understanding one another, and reported that they had learned a lot about writing. It is true that all but one student felt that he was being indoctrinated; the instructor did not feel that his subject matter was being neglected.

If we have failed in our teaching of written composition, perhaps it was partly because of our failure to inspire our students with a sense of commitment to this most difficult of the areas of English.

II. THE PLACE FOR ARTICULATION

Articulation of efforts in improving written composition is as important as it is in curriculum construction, in planning for teacher-training, in planning for more valid and reliable evaluation. I would like to see more intervisitation among high school and college teachers. Why not have a college composition teacher spend a few days with a unit on composition for a student body of 175-200 of varying ranges of ability in the modern comprehensive high school? The experience may be beneficial to him as a revelation of the problems that his colleagues in the lower echelons have to face. It may also be enlightening to the high school teacher conducting college classes to learn how much or how little of his instruction has been retained in college. This may be a salutary experience in that it may reveal some misplaced emphases, or some omissions of instruction, or the like.

I would like some professors of methodology in English who may not have been in a secondary school classroom since their high school days spend some time teaching composition to a heterogeneous class in which the I. Q. may range from 80 to 130. It is possible that this experience may inject a fresh point of view into the thinking of the methods teacher, while at the same time, it may spur him on to think through the challenge, and because of his superior knowledge, discover ways of meeting this challenge.

Administrators who blithely repeat Dr. Conant's recommendation of one composition a week to be corrected while they ignore the second part of his recommendation of a total student load of four classes of 100 students—they too could profit from a period in the classroom teaching the 175-200 students they assign to their English teachers. All this interchange of functions for even a brief time would lead, in my opinion, to greater understanding of the problem at its most crucial level—the secondary school—and I have enough faith in human intelligence and ingenuity to hope that significant improvement would result.

This exchange of experiences should be accompanied by other exchanges. For example, would it not be profitable if college

instructors evaluated some of the examinations prepared by secondary school English teachers? We, in my own school, spend countless hours preparing our grade-wide Uniform Midterm Examinations. Would it not be valuable to my hard-working staff to know what their college colleagues think of their efforts? And if we are on the wrong track and testing the wrong things, then why shouldn't we profit from honest, valid criticism? Likewise, the teachers of methods in English might be interested in studying these examinations, since they are far more expert in these matters than the average English teacher who may never have taken a course in tests and measurements. And if we test poorly, how shall we ever know what we are doing and how effectively or ineffectively?

III. IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

The central idea behind *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English* is the improvement of instruction. This is so obvious that sometimes, like the letter in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," the purpose is obscured. We cannot achieve this instructional improvement by mutual suspicion or recrimination, or by retreating to the ivory tower of research at the higher levels, or by wails of despair. When a better mousetrap or ballistic missile or even television program is desired strongly enough, it will be found. I should like to recommend the following measures for improving English instruction at the secondary level, the one I know best:

1. Institute the position of department head as a supervisor and improver of instruction wherever possible. Many of the 20,000 public high schools have no supervisor of English within the school or have a nominal head who has only routine functions. In my own school system in New York City, we have long had the position of Chairman of English, who is both administrator and supervisor. Instead of the usual five teaching classes, a homeroom, and a building assignment, he is relieved of the last two at all times, and of teaching in proportion to the number of teachers in the department. He also receives a substantial increase in salary of \$1,300 above that of any teacher at maximum.

Through this assignment, he may have as few as one or two teaching periods a day,

with the rest of the day free for administrative and supervisory functions. Thus he may leave early for professional conferences with colleagues or with curriculum workers. Since I have summarized the many services of such a supervisor elsewhere, I shall not repeat them here.²⁰ It is obvious to me that not much improvement in instruction in the average high school will take place without enlightened leadership; and the contributions of the department head, as I have described them, will go far toward improvement.

The improvement of instruction on the college and teacher training level I cannot presume to discuss with the same assurance. It is my hope that the publication of Volumes IV and V of the Commission on the Curriculum of the NCTE will give a strong impetus to self-evaluation and improvement on the upper levels. Some suggestions I am prepared to offer, based on my limited experience on the college and teacher-training levels.

2. Reward in some way the master teacher as today the master researcher is rewarded. I am not prepared to suggest criteria for discovering the master teacher, but if the validity of this concept is recognized, it should not be too difficult to set up criteria.

2. Free college teachers of English and teacher-trainers to visit lower schools to discover for themselves some of the best teaching at these echelons. Let them observe master teachers in other colleges. The privilege of sitting at the feet, pedagogically, of Kittredge, a Lowes, a Gummere, a Hyder Rollins, a Carleton Brown (in my own case) can be granted to a limited number. But I do not believe that with the passing of these shining lights of our profession we have entered into a pedagogical period

²⁰"Creative Supervision in the Secondary School," *The English Record*, IX, 2 (Winter 1958), 9-11. "Effective Supervisory and Administrative Bulletins," *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals*, XL, 233 (Dec. 1957), 97-118. "The Supervisor's Role in Supplementing an Effective Reading Program," *Reading in a Changing Society*, (1959), pp. 153-154. "The Role of the Department Head in Providing for Individualization of Instruction," *High School Journal*, XLII, 7 (Apr. 1959), 278-284.

of dimness or darkness. There are many master teachers in our land, and it should be the privilege of young and inexperienced teachers to observe them in action, to confer with them and learn some of their secrets. I have never forgotten a remark made by Dean Archibald Lewis Bouton of the New York University College of Arts and Sciences when he returned from a sabbatical just when I entered in 1924. He had gone to Scotland to study with Saintsbury, said Dean Bouton. He never mentioned the books he had read or the musty old records he had examined, but he did emphasize his experience with the great critic and *bon vivant*.

'Is it not strange that so much emphasis is placed in higher education on being away from the master teachers, rather than being with them? And I would be the last to depreciate the value of good sound scholarly training and independent research. Yet it seems a loss that the opportunity to observe the secrets and the arts of our great craftsmen is granted to so few!

4. We provide many workshops for elementary and high school teachers, but are sufficient provisions made both in time and funds for workshops, seminars, colloquia in the improvement of teaching on the college level, or the level of teacher education?

5. Have we explored sufficiently the ways to teach future teachers of English? Having worked with five such groups these past five summers, I have developed the greatest respect for them. Many have pinched pennies all year to save enough to come to Cornell or Columbia or Syracuse to take a methods course for the first time or to improve their present methods of teaching English. Among the questions I always ask myself before the term begins are: (a) What can I offer them that they cannot find in the two score or more textbooks on English methodology? (b) What materials can I supply to them which they can take home to their schools and use long after my last session is over? (c) How can I make each session so memorable both in content and presentation that it will make a lasting impression upon them and affect their teaching? (d) How can I inspire them with the feeling that although teaching English is the most difficult subject in the curriculum, it also gives the greatest satisfaction?

I must confess that when I grade myself on this little test, I rarely come up with more than a C minus; but that is an improvement over the grade I gave myself when I began five years ago. I submit that some such self-evaluation on the part of every teacher of teachers, done periodically and honestly, will raise the level of methods of teaching, and may possibly assist in bridging the gap between the English scholar-teachers and the teachers of methods and education generally. One can be a scholar in English methods as one can be in, shall we say, Chaucer's Romance Vocabulary, and a place should be found in our educational system for both types of scholar-teachers.

IV. THE TEACHER AS SCHOLAR

My last proposals have to deal with the teacher as scholar. When I took my teaching test in Brooklyn Technical High School in 1929, I was given a few chapters of *Ivanhoe* to teach. Being fresh from Carleton Brown's Anglo-Saxon course and Edouard Prokosch's Gothic course, and newly bedizened with my M.A., I could not resist the temptation to explain the etymology of *wassail* from the A. S. *waes hael*! I spoke enthusiastically and learnedly about the digraph *æ* and such matters. I was criticized by the examiner because he felt I was too much of a scholar, and was talking above the heads of these gifted ninth graders. Times, happily, have changed. Lewis Leary's *Contemporary Literary Scholarship* (1958) has a fascinating chapter, "Literary Scholarship and the Teaching of English," which merits consideration by teachers of English at all levels of instruction. On the college and graduate levels this requirement to be familiar with the latest literary scholarship has long been taken for granted. On the high school level the situation has left much to be desired. The reasons have been obvious. Few scholars in English went into high school teaching. There was so little time after the daily teaching and correction chores that secondary teachers were content with reading an occasional novel or biography or a copy of *The New York Times Book Review*. However, today, with the continued emphasis upon upgrading English instruction

and providing for the intellectually superior students, greater demands are being made upon the teacher's knowledge. The student is often better informed than the overworked teacher.

An almost classic instance of the way in which an error may be perpetuated on the high school level by those who may not have the time or interest to ascertain the facts, is that of the effect of the play *Justice* upon Winston Churchill, which I am fond of repeating because I was also involved. In Helen Louise Cohen's *Modern One-Act Plays* (1921), the introductory material to Galsworthy's "The Little Man" states: "The presentation of this play *Justice* (1909) moved The Home Secretary of the day, Winston Churchill, to put into effect several important reforms affecting the English prison system." I had always been impressed by this statement as an example of the power of the modern drama to influence social legislation. Yet, somehow, I had my doubts about the social power of this play. Term after term, however, I taught this supposed fact. When the plays of propaganda and revolt appeared in the depths of the Depression and almost all through the 1930s, I again quoted this example of the power of the pen to make great social changes. Finally, I determined that the best way to resolve my doubts would be to find out from the person involved, namely, Winston Churchill himself. There was a World War going on, and in deference to his other duties, I waited until the War was well over. Finally in September 1950, I wrote to Churchill, giving the quotation from the book, and asking whether this change had actually taken place, as a result of his seeing the play *Justice*. The reply is illuminating. For on 10 October 1950, his secretary, wrote on House of Commons stationery:

I am writing on behalf of Mr. Churchill to thank you for your letter of September 23rd.

I understand Mr. Churchill cannot recall ever having seen the play 'Justice' so I do not feel that there are any good grounds for believing that it influenced his policy in regard to prison reform as suggested.

This is only one instance, but who knows how many misstatements of fact are taught every day in our elementary and second-

ary schools because teachers have not bothered to read any of the newest books about their subjects? I am reminded of the lesson I observed recently of my oldest teacher. It was on Stephen Leacock's "Oxford as I See It." In the course of his discussion he blithely and assuredly referred to Leacock as still living, as teaching at the University of Toronto, and as teaching economics. There were only three things wrong with his facts. Leacock had been dead for several years; he had taught at McGill; and he had been Professor of Political Science, not Economics. My dear colleague never had a clear notion of the facts to begin with, and for twenty-five years of his teaching career he had never bothered to refresh his knowledge.

Several ways can be found for closing the gaps in literary scholarship.

1. In a summer course given at Teachers College in 1958, the main points of Lewis Leary's book constituted the subject matter of the course. Similar courses might be offered at summer sessions or in workshops. These can be made to apply particularly to the major works studied in high school as well as the general background in English and American literature.

2. The special numbers of *College English* (especially the most recent one on fiction) are veritable gold mines of information for the busy teacher who must frequently read while he runs. An excellent portfolio might be prepared by the NCTE and made available to secondary English teachers.

3. Here the foundations, publishers, newspapers, magazines, and mass media might be tapped to provide funds for summer workshops and institutes in the same way that great chemical and metallurgical industries offer aid to teachers of chemistry and physics to improve their knowledge of subject matter and skills of teaching. *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, last summer subsidized a number of journalism advisors of high school newspapers. Why not have more institutes of this kind?

4. Dignify the position of a scholar-teacher on the high school level. Today, he gets the same salary as the poorest and least informed teacher.

Finally, I would recommend even wider distribution of the *Basic Issues*. For ex-

ample, copies should be sent to: (1) all chairmen of local school boards, (2) the secondary school principals, (3) librarians of all public and college libraries, (4) presidents of PTA's and many of the members, (5) the most important newspapers and magazines, and (6) the mass media organizations.

I have discussed only four aspects of the *Basic Issues*: written composition, articulation, improvement of instruction, the teacher as scholar. We have for too long a time been bemoaning our deficiencies, and the remedies we have offered have been patchwork at best. What is required now is a cooperative endeavor based on mutual understanding and good faith. With

all the wisdom, scholarship, and experience behind us in our combined efforts to resolve *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English*, we cannot fail. Perhaps the one thing we lack was so well expressed by Ansari, the Persian philosopher of Herat of the eleventh century: "Can you walk on water? You have done no better than a straw. Can you fly in the air? You have done no better than a bluebottle. Conquer your heart; then you may become somebody."¹¹ Perhaps more of us need to conquer our hearts and then we shall conquer the problems of our profession.

¹¹William Nichols, ed., *A New Treasury of Words to Live By* (1959), p. 159.

THE PRR-AFFILIATES BREAKFAST IN DENVER

BRICE HARRIS

The 1958 President of NCTE and current Chairman of the Council's Curriculum on the Profession is Professor of English Literature at the Pennsylvania State University.

One of the Council highlights of 1959 was the PRR-Affiliate Breakfast held in Denver on Saturday 27 November, and sponsored by the Commission on the Profession. The topic for discussion was "The Revolution in Communication and Its Impact on English Teaching," based on a mimeographed report submitted by Mrs. Luella B. Cook and her Commission subcommittee. Over two hundred participants seated at twenty or more tables talked during and after breakfast on this topic until the nine-o'clock section meetings were called. A member of the Commission or a key Council member was chairman at each table, and each submitted a report. I should like to provide in the following paragraphs a brief digest of some of the major discussions.

Informal talk at table frequently has a habit of rambling even though a chairman is on hand to steer it back on the track. But most groups at this event exhibited a surprising unity and purpose. The revolution in communication, they felt, necessitated many changes in the education of English teachers. The English teacher of the future

must be given a greater understanding of world literature and culture. School programs will inevitably place greater emphasis on foreign cultures; concepts are not limited by geographical boundaries. Some participants warned that children need a firm grounding first in their own literature. Many of them felt that the proportion and the relationship between native and world literature to be taught in the future needed investigation.

The Commission Report initiated several warm discussions on television, film, and other mass media. Members of affiliates were convinced that their local groups had a job to do here. They suggested the formation of watchdog committees to study local television programming. Local stations broadcasting radio or television programs are receptive both to suggestions and to protests concerning slovenly speech or poor taste. They likewise appreciate praise for programs that are well done. Some participants urged that the time was ripe for a study of the actual uses which teachers are making of both commercial and educational television. Should teachers make

recommendations for more or for less use of the medium? In other words, why not lead more and follow less in realizing the values and the import of this revolution in mass media? An affiliate, for example, might plan a special conference at its fall or spring meeting on the problem of teaching discrimination in the mass media and pass the results on to other affiliates.

Some suggestions were made to NCTE headquarters about keeping affiliates informed on this subject. Headquarters might develop a method of highlighting important films, including television films, perhaps through a special section of Council magazines. Headquarters might prepare and mail to school districts a sample brochure designed to inform parents what teachers are trying to do when they use commercial television. In this connection, an opinion was advanced that Headquarters might broaden Council influence by periodically sending news releases to affiliates for use in newspaper, television, and radio publicity.

Surveying the Commission Report, participants found abundant work for Council affiliates to perform in the months ahead. Briefly, here are some of their recommendations: (1) Personalize contacts between their associations and individuals, principals, and state departments of education. Show how the association can offer assistance in meeting the problems faced by schools. (2) Work with constructive leaders in the lay community to develop a better understanding of the English program. Prepare news releases for community papers. Urge teachers to participate actively and to provide leadership within lay groups. (3) Schedule meetings of the "discussion type" (like these breakfast talks). Affiliates may wish to use the Commission Report to stimulate group discussion at the local level. (Copies are available from NCTE Headquarters.) (4) Collect evidence from local teachers to demonstrate the present work load of English teachers. (5) Concentrate on involving more elementary teachers at the local level. (6) Encourage and sponsor Junior Affiliates in colleges near them. (7) Make semi-public reports of the NCTE convention and other

Council news to local groups, say to PTA and service clubs. Release bulletins to the press on proposed convention trips in advance of the Convention. (8) Evaluate the lay reader experiments and circulate the findings.

Inevitably, the discussions turned sometimes to more general suggestions for the good of the Council, but in one way or another most of them centered on the broad subject of the profession of English teaching. Many participants wished anew that we might establish scholarships in English comparable to those established for other subjects in the National Defense Act. We might expand distribution of *Council-Grams* and the *NCTE Newsletter*, even including in one or the other some progress reports from Council committees. We could try to provide a real monetary award for high school seniors receiving annual NCTE Awards. We might provide funds to assist directors with travel expenses. We might set up a committee to review curricular materials submitted by small school districts—just now teachers in these districts could use someone to assess the worth of their work. They need outside evaluation. We might more actively encourage and support summer conferences. And (would you believe it?) we might consider appointing a legislative lobbyist, a public relations representative, to work with the United States Congress and with state legislatures!

At any rate, the affair was such a success that you may look forward to another PRR-Affiliates Breakfast in Chicago next November. In all probability the topic will deal with the impact on the teaching of English of many new proposals which materially alter our conception of teacher-student relationships—teaching machines, automatic teaching, lay readers, educational television, team teaching, and so forth. The Commission on the Profession will again sponsor the Breakfast, and the incoming Executive Secretary, who directed the November meeting and who is also a member of the Commission, will arrange the program with the help of a special committee. Provision has been made for thirty additional minutes of discussion.

NCTE ELECTION NOTICE

In accordance with the Constitution of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Board of Directors at its meeting last Thanksgiving Day chose James McCampbell, Mildred A. Dawson, Anthony Tovatt, George Stout, and R. C. Simonini, Jr. as members of a Nominating Committee to propose officers for 1961. Through Mr. Simonini, the chairman, the committee offers these nominations:

President: Harold B. Allen, Professor of English, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

1st Vice-President: G. Robert Carlsen, Teacher of English, University High School, Iowa City, Iowa

2nd Vice-President: Donald R. Tuttle, Professor of English, Fenn College, Cleveland, Ohio

Directors-at-large: Jarvis E. Bush, Teacher of English, Wauwatosa High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Miss Virginia P. Cowles, Instructor in English, Bradford Junior College, Bradford, Massachusetts; Hilda M. Fife, Professor of English, University of Maine, Orono, Maine; Thomas G. Moore, Teacher of English, Ferguson High School, Ferguson, Missouri; Miss Mary E. Ohm, Teacher of English, Woodrow Wilson Junior High School, Terre Haute, Indiana; Jerry E. Reed, Supervising Teacher of English, Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado.

This slate will be presented for action at the meeting of the Board next November. Other nomination(s) may be made by petition(s) signed by twenty Directors of the Council and presented to the Secretary of the Council, with the written consent of the nominee(s), before 16 August. When Mr. Simonini moves the election of the committee's nominees, other nominations may be made by members of the Board.

NCTE CO-SPONSORED WORKSHOPS FOR 1960

Each paragraph below lists the following items in order: where the workshop is, dates, local place, director, major topic, level of participants, and person to write to for further information.

Ball State Teachers College. 13-24 June. Room 202 English Building, Ball State Teachers College. Dr. Thomas H. Wetmore. Application of Linguistics to the Teaching of English. Junior and Senior High School Teachers of English primarily, but also open to interested elementary teachers. Dr. Thomas H. Wetmore, Dept. of English, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.

Purdue University. 11-29 July (tentative). Heavilon Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. George B. Schick. Teaching reading-improvement skills in secondary school, college, and adult programs. Junior and senior high school and college teachers and administrators, teach-

ers and administrators of adult programs. Prof. George B. Schick, Dept. of English, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

Purdue University. 20 June-8 July (tentative). West Lafayette, Indiana. Russell Cosper. English language. General, mostly junior and senior high school teachers, some college. Prof. Russell Cosper, Dept. of English, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

Wayne State University. 27 June-6 August. College of Education, Wayne State University. Dr. William E. Hoth. Workshop in Secondary School Reading. Junior high and senior high teachers. Dr. William E. Hoth, College of Education, Wayne State University, Detroit 2, Michigan.

Southern Illinois University. 6-10; 13-17 June. Southern Illinois University. W. B. Schneider. Improving teaching techniques. Junior and senior high school; (13-17 June, junior high school). Professor George C. Camp, Dept. of English, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

San Jose State College. 20-24 June. San Jose State College. Dr. Henry Meckel; Dr. Alice Scofield, Dr. Helen Lodge. Workshop in the teaching of composition for elementary, secondary, and college teachers. Dr. Henry C. Meckel, Dept. of English, San Jose State College, San Jose, California.

Utah State University. 13-25 June. Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Harry H. Crosby, Boston University, Secondary; Warren Ketchum, University of Michigan, Elementary. Literature Is a Fundamental. Elementary, junior high, high school teachers. Professor T. Y. Booth, Dept. of English, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

West Virginia State College. Three weeks beginning 20 June. College Library, West Virginia State College. Dr. Lorena E. Kemp. New Perspectives in the Teaching of English. Teachers in elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges. Dr. Lorena E. Kemp, Chairman, Dept. of English, West Virginia State College, Institute, West Virginia.

Murray State College, Kentucky. 13 June-1 July. Murray State College. James Hocker Mason, Associate Professor of English, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana. The Teaching of the Language Arts. Primarily, senior high school teachers; however, some junior high school teachers will be accepted. Dr. Guy Battle, Head, Dept. of English, Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky.

Indiana State Teachers College, Indiana. 20 July-24 August. Indiana State Teachers College. James Hocker Mason, Associate Professor of English, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana. The Problems of the Teaching of the Language Arts. In-service or beginning teachers at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels. Dr. George Smock, Head, Dept. of English, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana.

University of Georgia. 25 July-18 August. College of Education, University of

Georgia. Dr. Mary J. Tingle. Communication in the Modern World. Junior and senior high school teachers. Dr. Mary J. Tingle, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

Arizona State College (Division of Teacher Education), Flagstaff. 25 July-5 August. Eastburn Education Center. Dr. Mildred Dawson, Sacramento State College, Sacramento, California. Language Arts. Elementary school teachers, the majority of whom will be working for graduate degrees. Dr. Minnie Roseberry, Arizona State College, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Indiana University. 20 June-6 July. Indiana University. Mauree Applegate, LaCrosse State Teachers College, LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Language Arts in the Elementary School with Emphasis on Children's Writing. Elementary and junior high school teachers. Prof. Ruth Strickland, School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

The Agricultural and Technical College, Greensboro, North Carolina. 6-24 June and 27 June-15 July. A. and T. College. Mrs. Carrye H. Kelley, Associate Professor of English, A. and T. College. Developing a Writing Program in the Schools and Colleges of North Carolina. Teachers on the primary, elementary, junior high, senior high levels. Students on the junior high, senior high levels. Mrs. Carrye H. Kelley, Dept. of English, A. and T. College, Greensboro, North Carolina.

State University of Iowa. 13-24 June. Old Capitol Building, State University of Iowa. Richard Braddock and Carl A. Dalling, Preparing High School Students for College Composition. High school and college English teachers. Professor G. Robert Carlsen, School of Education, University High School, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

New York State English Council Summer Workshop. 1-5 August. State University College of Education, Plattsburgh, New York. Dr. Mollie K. Wild, State University College of Education. Teaching English from grades K to 12. Secondary and elementary school teachers. Dr. Mollie K. Wild, Professor of Education, State University Teachers College, Plattsburgh, New York.

Rebuttal

THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIMENT: AN ESSAY IN DISBELIEF

JAMES SLEDD

Now on leave at the University of Ceylon, Dr. Sledd is a professor at Northwestern University and the author of A Short Introduction to English Grammar (1959).

On November 29, 1957, the College English Association of San Francisco's Bay Area unanimously approved a statement on "High School Preparation in English." Two years later, in *College English* for November of 1959, the statement has been printed. A historical introduction [by James J. Lynch] explains not only the the Association's approval was unanimous but that the reception of the statement by the colleges and universities of California "was remarkably enthusiastic" and that arrangements are being made to send a copy to every high school English teacher and principal in that state. The editor of *College English* offers to confer the same benefit even more widely. In an editorial headnote, he hopes "that the document below can serve as a model for a nation-wide effort in the all-important field of articulating school and college English," and his editorial tailnote announces that "additional copies of the above are available at the Council office for ten cents each or for five cents each in quantities of fifty or more."

I think the price is too high. I propose to show, first, that the California experiment rests on a theory of dictatorship in education; second, that California's prescription for the high schools is confused and vague; and third, that to this prescription there are acceptable though less gaudy alternatives which embody whatever is good in the prescription itself.

1. The California experiment rests on a theory of dictatorship in education.

It is not surprising that this charge has been made before. The historian of the experiment, speaking for the committee which drafted the prescription, attempts a defense; but the defense is so clumsy that it ends in a confession. The relevant passage admits of no misunderstanding:

The danger of having one's efforts construed as "dictatorial" is ever-present and must be borne constantly in mind by those undertaking such a project as this one. Any program affecting a part of a sequence is, of course, likely to seem "dictatorial." We can only hope that the serious high school teacher will see that to be so is not the conscious wish of the colleges but is inherent in the very nature of education as a continuous process: that progress through a series of stages requires that the preparation in any one stage be formulated according to the goals of following stages. Otherwise the cumulative and referential nature of the educative process is vitiated and progress becomes impossible.

"The occasional charges of being authoritarian could not," therefore, "be allowed to distract" the committee "from its purpose: to define as fully and as precisely as it deemed appropriate what it regarded as, in the colleges' view, the best high school preparation in English."

What, in plain terms, does this mean? It means that education is dictatorial by nature, that because education is "a continuous process . . . a series of stages," the directors of the later stages must dictate to the directors of the earlier. One might just as well conclude that the kindergarten should dictate to the college: continuity will equally be preserved whichever partner dictates to the other. Even more subversively, one might conclude that other departments of the college or university might dictate to the English department the content of Freshman English courses for everyone but English majors, for at a later stage of their education most students will be doing physics or home economics or engineering or animal husbandry, not English. Or (unless we conceive of education as ending with the commencement orgies) why should not the Chamber of Commerce dictate to us all? The surest

way out of this foolish peonage is simply to assert that education and dictatorship are incompatible, but the Bay Area committee refuses to take that way. For the committee, education is by nature dictatorial.

In the quotation I have given, I need hardly insist, no other construction can be put on the word *so*, especially when it is used by a determined grammarian.

Any program affecting a part of a sequence is, of course, likely to seem "dictatorial." We can only hope that the serious high school teacher will see that to be *so* is not the conscious wish of the colleges but is inherent in the very nature of education as a continuous process. . . .

Dictatorial, still stinking after its bath in sanitary quotation marks, is the only adjectival form for which *so* can here substitute; and what is "inherent in the very nature of education" is thus "to be dictatorial." The alternative to the charge of tyranny is an accusation of incompetence in writing.

I do not know what consequences may follow from this doctrine of dictatorship in education; for the historian of the Bay Area committee, unable to argue respectably for what is not respectable, has left the doctrine undeveloped. If full citizenship is a later stage in "the educative process" than undergraduate status, the consequences are disastrous; for then our governments can dictate what we shall teach. But I cannot pretend to know what is meant by the bare statement that education is dictatorial by nature. Either retraction or precise reaffirmation must clarify this matter. At the moment I am content to add that the ractics of California's experimentalists, if they really believe in educational dictatorship, are highly suspicious. The Bay Area Association has distributed its statement to all high school English teachers and principals in its state; it has sought the approval of all English departments there; it has won the support of the National Council, whose facilities are being used to distribute the statement. The unfortunate teacher who disagrees may well feel that every available thumbscrew is being turned and that the one way with dissenters will be the shortest way. The answers to the three questions which the committee is said to have faced will not reassure him. The committee de-

termined, we are told, not to "concentrate solely on the preparation of the college-bound student" but to state "a reasonable ideal for all students." Does this mean that the dictatorship is to be universal? The committee determined that it should not "attempt only a statement of principles" but "should . . . suggest course content also." Will it now require belief in all the propositions implicit in its statement, such as the inseparability of content from form, the special merit of theme-hunting criticism, the opposition of ideas as superior to facts as inferior, the separation of literary criticism (superior) from literary history (inferior), and even the necessity of limiting the subjects of student writing and of class discussion to literature? The committee determined, thirdly, that it should not "regard itself as in any sense circumscribed by existing high school courses and practices" but should "characterize what it regarded as the ideal." Is the dictatorship to be absolute?

With irony which one wishes were conscious, the committee's historian still manages to praise the committee for its restraint: it did not go on to "require" the teacher "to adopt specific classroom procedures."

2. *California's prescription for the high schools is confused and vague.*

For two reasons, I think the Bay Area presidium stands condemned by its own edict. It stands condemned because on basic issues it speaks in the platitudes which it officially deplores and because it pleads for "clear and consecutive thinking" while showing no awareness of the logical consequences of its own illogical arguments.

2.1. *On basic issues the presidium speaks in the platitudes which it officially deplores.*

A platitude, like political power, is ethically neutral until it is used, and the ugliest specimen, snatched by caesarean section from the womb of its context, need not disgrace its parents. There is much to be said for platitudes in their proper place. In high matters of faith and doctrine, however, circumspection is necessary, or the witch-hunter may be burned instead of the witch. Today, what the presidium mincingly calls "grammatical matters" are the best ground for brokenfield wizardry,

and it is in this very area that the rules of the presidium's game are vaguest. In themselves, the following vacuities are unintelligible: "proper habits of expression in writing and speech," "gross errors," "disciplined expression," "grammatical literacy," "disciplined habits of expression," "mispronunciations and slovenly enunciation," "literate and fluent speech and writing."

That the committee should content itself with these vacuities is equally unintelligible, since it seems much concerned with language. All the English teacher's work, it would appear from the committee's peroration, is "work with language"; yet the committee gives him no linguistic guidance. By what standards is the student's language to be judged erroneous, his pronunciation faulty? When the teacher teaches "grammatical matters . . . in conjunction with writing and speech," what "grammatical matters" shall he teach? And how is he to encourage students "to comprehend qualities of style, such as rhythm, cadence, and the balance of connotation with denotation" unless he himself is something of a phonologist and lexicographer? These are questions which cannot be dismissed, particularly at a time when everybody is talking about language and linguistics, and the committee's resolute evasion is puzzling. Did it not know that the questions exist? Was it divided within itself, or afraid to face the issues? Or did it assume that its emphasis on "discipline" was enough warning to the teacher that he would risk his neck if he went bat-fowling after "the new linguistics"?

2.2. *The committee pleads for "clear and consecutive thinking" while showing no awareness of the logical consequences of its own illogical arguments.*

Whatever else may be unclear in the manifesto, it is dayplain that it demands a great deal of the high school teacher. I have met few teachers, in high school or in college, with the required accomplishments. If such teachers existed, the articulation of school and college English would be a simple problem. The college teachers would only have to learn to keep up with their high school colleagues. But daydreams have their logic too. One cannot assume that a glorious revolution will be

spontaneous. For good teachers, there must be better teachers of teachers. Under the new dispensation, college teachers of high school teaching will have their own large, disorderly house to rearrange. One unforeseen consequence of the presidium's reverie is that it will have no more time for manifestos.

At least one reader can face that consequence with equanimity, for I do not find the logic of the present effort rich with promise. I will say no more of the numerous passages which suggest the opposition and superiority of ideas and criticism to history and facts: "content, whether factual or thoughtful," "data and ideas," "not a mere matter of gathering facts or even ideas"; "the study of selected masterpieces . . . rather than the extended review of English and American literary history," rigorous subordination "of literary history and biography"; etc. I cannot read *Hamlet* as a twentieth-century play, and if I divorce facts from ideas, the idea that the College English Association is the French Academy ceases to be absurd. I will not even linger over the remark that if the student must be specially warned against the assumption "that content is always separable from form," he cannot be specially encouraged to reduce a masterpiece of story to a "thematic statement"—the choice of a particular banality being arbitrarily determined by the teacher's pet formula of reduction. I do wish to consider two of the presidium's decrees: first, that "the education in English described here is intended to be a reasonable ideal for all students, toward which they should be encouraged to strive, whatever their future plans"; and second, that there can be "real integration in the teacher's total work with language" "only when literature provides the substance for the students' writing and speech and when writing and speech enhance the humane values of literature."

2.2.1. Every man his own platitudinizer: for me, circumstances alter cases. Holding that belief, I cannot accept, as "a reasonable ideal for all students," "the education in English" which the committee describes. The committee argues "that terminal high school students" should be "given the best education within their grasp." Unless the committee assumes what it should prove, it

does not follow that that education is "the education in English described here." Again, I feel no overwhelming force in the committee's arguments "that to tailor the education of students on the basis of the students' own expectations of their future needs is a pedagogically unsound and an inherently dangerous practice." To play tailor on this basis (the figure is not mine), "assumes that needs are inflexible, that second-rate minds deserve only second-rate training, and that comprehensive education is needed by the future leaders but not by the general public." It is not instantly plain how flexibility can be flexed into an argument for imposing one education on all students, whatever their abilities, their backgrounds, their earlier training, their interests, the colleges they plan to attend, the courses they plan to take, or the jobs they hope to get; and the remaining arguments are once more gratuitous assumptions that only the committee's training is first-rate and that no other comprehensive education is conceivable. As a first step toward "clear and consecutive thinking," perhaps we might warn students against the syllogism whose unstated premise is its conclusion.

2.2.2. The most sensational use of this familiar conjuring pass is the committee's peroration.

The colleges and universities are aware that conditions will not be ideal in the high schools so long as classes are large and the demands made on the English teacher by nonteaching duties are numerous. They therefore believe that it becomes all the more necessary to devote the available class time to the best literature and to intensive discipline in the use of language. They also believe that fragmentizing the subject matter of the English classes is self-defeating. Only when literature provides the substance for the students' writing and speech and when writing and speech enhance the humane values of literature can there be real integration in the teacher's total work with language.

Only is as treacherous a word as *so*. It excludes all possibilities but one. In every English class in every high school, the commissars decree, students must speak and write only about the best literature. I think that is hogwash; and in saying so I have given as good an argument against the decree as all the commissars have given for

it. They announce it, I denounce it; and since a baa of assent is no more compelling logically than a Bronx cheer, the score is even. To refute the absurd "conclusion" less absurdly, one needs only to glance at the earlier pages of the manifesto itself. What has become of the "broad perspective" in which English study was to be placed? Does anyone seriously believe that from the necessity of preparing "the general public" to "elect, correct, encourage, restrain, direct, and replace its leaders," one can argue that in the English class the student of English must never speak or write about "current events" or "the mass media" but only about "the best literature"? Are the earlier instructions to the administrator cancelled, and need he now supply only a "sufficient quantity of appropriate literary texts" and not "literary and other texts"? Presumably the student need no longer "be taught how to draw upon his own intellectual resources so that he can bring to bear upon any essay topic his total knowledge and experience." The zeal for orthodoxy has made the orthodox itself heretical: phrases like *any topic* and *total knowledge and experience* must go, and along with them the feeble liberalism of the suggestion that from time to time the student might usefully evaluate "a school activity." As for "creative writing," hitherto reserved as an elective prize for "students of superior gifts," the problem may be alliteratively solved by the mere replacement of *writing* by *criticism*. The happy change will cancel all enrollment; the teacher of creative writing can give full time to driving his taxi; and the last trace of evil diversity will be removed.

Narrow is the way.

3. *To the committee's prescription, there are acceptable though less gaudy alternatives which embody whatever is good in the prescription itself.*

Bronx cheers for a conclusion which does not follow from its premises need not be Bronx cheers for the premises. The loudest Bronx cheerer could list from the manifesto some dozens of propositions to which he could cordially assent. "The general public" needs "comprehensive education," and high school teachers should try to provide it; "no student . . . should be deprived of

the soundest training in English that he can be given"; "fragmentizing the subject matter of the English classes is self-defeating"; high school students should be trained "in clear and consecutive thinking, in clear and vigorous expression, and in thoughtful and imaginative reading"; "the development of skill in the use of language is primarily a matter of forming habits"; students should write a lot; they "should be taught to write naturally and fluently"; "talented but undisciplined writers" should not be unduly flattered; "recitations and discussion should be criticized for organization as well as content"; "students should be taught . . . to criticize what they hear," including what they hear from teachers; they should learn to read different kinds of books in appropriately different ways; they should not spend much time on bad books when there are so many good ones; we in the colleges and universities should "really know what we want"; we should aim high; we should be self-critical; we should "offer some constructive leadership in solving" the problem "of articulating school and college English," but we should not be consciously dictatorial (or unconsciously or half-consciously either); we should not talk only "platitudes—true, innocuous, and fruitless"; we should wholeheartedly support good teachers of literature and composition in the high schools; we should recognize that "conditions will not be ideal in the high schools so long as classes are large and the demands made on the English teacher by non-teaching duties are numerous"; we should try to help lighten these demands and to win respect for our high school colleagues; etc., etc.

That is a broad foundation of unforced agreement. The trouble with the manifesto is not that it is lacking in true, innocuous, and even fruitful platitudes but that beyond the innocuous platitudes all is nocuous. It need not be so; and though I consider a steamroller a political and not a logical instrument, it is foolish not to learn from one's opponents. Their successes and even their failures can be instructive.

The commissars have no sense of humor. Let us have one, and let it make me admit that my obstreperosity is as ridiculous as their solemnity. A good high school teacher has some reason for laughing at us all; and

if we really believe in self-knowledge and self-discipline (*video meliora*), we will admit that in our exchanges with him the teacher-pupil relationship may reverse itself amusingly. Our protection against scorn must be respect for him and for his freedom; and here, if we learn from the commissars, we learn from them as an object lesson. It is not obstreperous to insist that dictators are contemptible, and it is not fruitless to insist on some other platitudes as well. There is a value in diversity, in all things counter, original, and strange; for when the odds against every horse are high, only a sucker will bet all his money on just one. Nothing that we must do by force, except to repel force, is worth the price of using force. Conversion by high-pressure advertising is not salvation but damnation. Those are first principles.

If they are, then telling the high school teacher what we "require" him to do will not solve the problem of articulating high school and college English. We have no right to make unilateral demands, we cannot enforce them without destroying the freedom for which we educate, and the most happily submissive high school teacher cannot do what he has not himself been taught to do. We teach him. We will never "solve" the problem of articulation—which is only another way of saying that not all people will agree until all but one of them are dead; but we in the colleges and universities will make the problem less painful to live with if we do two things. First, we must try to improve the conditions of teaching in the high schools so that intelligent people in larger numbers will want to be trained to teach there. Second, when we have intelligent people to train, as best we can we must train them to read and write and to teach reading and writing as best they can. But different intelligent people will teach reading, writing, and teaching, and will learn to read and write and teach, in different ways.

A good many consequences follow from these old statements. It is worth saying, I think, in the first place, that we should be citizens as well as scholars. The commissars can properly exercise their political skill, and we less skilful can properly imitate them, in persuading governments to do whatever is necessary to raise the salaries

and shorten the working hours of high school teachers, to protect them from violence and indiscipline, to reduce the number of their students, and to insure the teachers a respected place in the community. The republic of letters will not suffer irreparably if, to balance things out, our own relatively short hours are somewhat lengthened so that our departments may offer good programs when teachers and prospective teachers need them, especially in the summers. Our scholarship will be better, though our bibliographies may be shorter, if we also make our teaching less perfunctory; good teachers are not bred by bad. Our chairmen might consider, as they enthusiastically and unanimously endorse manifestos, whether our best men are at least sometimes teaching teaching and whether our teachers of teachers really know the subjects to be

taught. This comment applies particularly to the teaching of the teaching of grammar. Finally, I suggest again that we ask ourselves whether our aversion to "positivism," our separation of "facts" from "ideas," our almost superstitious devotion to "criticism" at the expense of history, have really led to better criticism. For all our talk about better reading, I suspect that most of us read worse than our opposite numbers of twenty-five or fifty years ago.

Let me sum up, without solemnity, by adapting a remark which I once heard made about my favorite baseball team. The White Sox have at last won a pennant (1959 of blessed memory). They have always made it a point to have good shortstops: Luke Appling, Chico Carrasquel, Luis Aparicio. I doubt that any of the three could talk as good a game as Chuck Comiskey.

A REJOINDER

JAMES J. LYNCH

A professor at the University of California at Berkeley, Dr. Lynch has published a book on Dr. Johnson's London (1953) and articles on pedagogy.

The above "rebuttal" seems to contain two arguments: that the statement on high school preparation in English prepared by the College English Association of the Bay Area is "dictatorial," and that only linguists can teach English or assist English teachers. The first is an accusation, irresponsible because made without examination of the evidence. The facts are two: that the statement was drafted only after it had been requested by the high schools and that the question they asked was "What do the colleges want?" Has answering a question now become "dictatorial"? "Responsive" would seem to be a more accurate term. That the high schools have welcomed the statement and continue to ask for additional copies of it indicates the absurdity of the accusation.

The second point is unclear. If English teachers must become linguists, Professor Sledd should tell them whose brand of

linguistics is best. Perhaps he is offering his own. There are many brands. There are also many linguists. Most of them agree on one matter: that their methods can *describe* language; but the teachers' task is to help students *use* language. They disagree at many other points, including one on which teachers have a right to demand assurance: that linguistic methods produce better results in the classroom. Do they?

As readers may have deduced from Professor Sledd's diction, our differences are not without a biographical aspect, but this is of no interest to the readers of this journal. I will therefore conclude only by saying that I am pleased to be able to agree with Professor Sledd's statement that "we must try to improve the conditions of teaching in the high schools so that intelligent people in larger numbers will want to be trained to teach there."

ISABEL AND THE IRONIES

JACK E. WALLACE

Dr. Wallace will be an instructor at Miami University (Ohio) this fall.

In "Henry James and Gestation" (*College English*, XXI, Dec. 1959, 173-174), Mr. H. G. Flinn and Dr. Howard C. Key argue that Isabel Archer, the high-principled heroine of James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, "had a baby just six months after her marriage to Osmond" (p. 174). They then make a number of strange assumptions, preferring the most scandalous and least likely. Isabel had an affair, got pregnant, and "was perhaps blackmailed into marriage." From this situation, we are assured, "the ironies reach out in all directions."

Flinn and Key base their argument on three statements in the novel. In the autumn of 1876 Madame Merle tells Ned Rosier that Isabel "had a poor little boy, who died two years ago, six months after his birth" (New York Edition II, 96). A few days later, describing Pansy, James refers to an episode prior to Isabel's marriage as having happened "three years before" (p. 107). Early in November 1876, Isabel tells Rosier that Osmond's purchases since his marriage have been "within the last three years" (p. 101). These passages, claim Flinn and Key, "intimate quite plainly that Isabel and Osmond have not been married longer than three years" and that "the reader seeking out a timetable for the novel has only these three references to assist him over the hiatus between Isabel courted and Isabel married."

The passages intimate no such thing, of course, and for those who read a few more

chapters, James provides a specific and satisfactory timetable. (My dates are derived from James's mention on page 89 of the "autumn of 1876" as the time of Rosier's visit to Madame Merle.) Isabel and Osmond were married on a hot day "in the month of June," 1873 (II, 137). Nearly two years later, "late in the month of April," Ralph visits Isabel in Rome (p. 139). He senses her unhappiness but cannot account for it: "She had lost her child; that was a sorrow, but it was a sorrow she scarcely spoke of. . . . It belonged to the past, moreover; it had occurred six months before" (p. 142). If the child was six months old when it died, it must have been born in April 1874, a full ten months after Isabel's marriage.

Madame Merle, then, is quite accurate. The child died in November 1874. Isabel is also accurate. The Osmonds did not move to Rome until the winter following their marriage (p. 139), and, since Gilbert bought for the Palazzo Roccanera, his purchases would have been made "within the last three years." James refers to Pansy's having walked in the Cascine "three years before" because that is the way one would most likely refer in November 1876 to an event in the spring of 1873.

One hesitates to draw attention to such obvious matters but as long as certain critics are blindly preoccupied with ironies that "reach out in all directions," someone must look, now and then, at the text.

"HENRY JAMES AND GESTATION": A REPLY

JOHN C. BRODERICK

An associate professor at Wake Forest College, Dr. Broderick has published articles on American literature.

May I speak out in defense of the honor of a lady, Isabel Archer, the lady of American fiction? In doing so, I would simul-

taneously exonerate her from the suspicion of premarital dalliance and her author, Henry James, from vagueness "on gesta-

tional processes," sinister diabolical intentions respecting his heroine, and/or carelessness in the art of fiction.

Two readers of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Messrs. H. G. Flinn and Howard C. Key,¹ think that they have discovered a "scandalous inadvertence" in the novel. Madame Merle, in speaking to Edward Rosier, refers to Isabel's "little boy, who died two years ago, six months after his birth." Since there follow two references to the Osmonds' "three years" of married life, the authors conclude that Isabel must have had a baby "just six months after her marriage to Osmond" (p. 174). Hence "Isabel Archer can no longer be the spotless Diana, the high-principled, noble example of American womanhood betrayed by the machinations of both her well-wishers and her not-so-well-wishers. She becomes just another high-spirited young girl who played with fire and almost got burnt, who was perhaps blackmailed into marriage." The authors offer several other possible alternatives to explain this discrepancy, including James's bachelor state and consequent vagueness about matters of this sort.

James has not nodded; Messrs. Flinn and Key have. Although some references are in round numbers, Isabel's marriage and the birth and death of her child are all dated with precision and propriety:

The marriage: "He [Ralph Touchett] consoled himself as he might by behaving (as he deemed) beautifully, and was present at the ceremony by which Isabel was united to Mr. Osmond, and which was performed in Florence *in the month of June*" (New York Edition, II, 137, italics added).

The birth and death of the child are dated first by reference to Rosier's visit to Madame Merle, which occurs on an "afternoon of the *autumn of 1876*" (II, 89, italics added). During this visit Madame Merle makes the reference to Isabel's "poor little boy, who died *two years ago, six months after his birth*" (II, 96, italics added). From these references we know that the child died in the autumn of 1874, after his birth in the spring of that year. A more precise dating is available by reference to Ralph Touchett's visit to Rome "late in the month

of April of this second year" of Isabel's marriage, that is, April 1875 (II, 139). In the reflections connected with that visit, the loss of the child is referred to as having occurred "six months before" (II, 142), in other words, late October 1874. Combining these references, we would fix April 1874 as the date of birth, late October 1874 as the date of death, and later October (or early November) 1876 as the date of Rosier's visit to Madame Merle. (The dating of the visit is confirmed also by the arrival of Ralph and Lord Warburton some two weeks later; this manifestly occurs in late November 1876, "eighteen months" after the end of Ralph's month-long visit in the spring of 1875—II, 145, 147.)

The birth of a child in April of the year following a marriage in June is hardly calculated to set tongues wagging or heads shaking. The reference to the three-year duration of the marriage (at the time of the visit) is, therefore, in unimaginatively round numbers. From the explicit evidence of the text, the Osmonds had been married three years and four months (from June 1873 to autumn 1876). And Rosier's "courtship" of Isabel having occurred nearly five years earlier rather than three, as Messrs. Flinn and Key assert, Rosier was not likely to catch any diabolical innuendoes in Madame Merle's innocuous remark. If objection be made to the reference to the child, it is that this potentially meaningful detail is casually handled, not that it contains too deep ironies and too fruitful ambiguities.

The faulty reading of the text is, to me, less offensive than the inferences mistakenly drawn from it. They are—to use a Jamesism—the reverse of felicitous. To reduce *The Portrait of a Lady* to a paltry tale of "playing with fire" and being "blackmailed into marriage" is unworthy. Not only would this be inconsistent with Isabel's "virginal" nature, a recognizable facet of her character not necessarily approved by James; it also defames a fictional character of dignity and nobility, whatever her limitations. Her marriage is a tragic involvement in circumstances, not to be accounted for so simply. I do not mean, of course, that premarital sexual activity cannot be treated in fiction with dignity; I merely

¹"Henry James and Gestation," *College English*, XXI (Dec. 1959), 173-175.

insist that James's novel is something else again. Nor should the careful stylist have to occupy a position of such extreme vulnerability that discovery of the slightest inadvertence should be thought to (partially) invalidate his art. Perhaps it is fortunate that James was as careful as we find him to be and that the inadvertence (as here) is more likely critic's than author's.

In the interest of further clarification I append a rough chronology of major datable landmarks in the novel, with page references which are identical for both the New York edition and the more accessible Modern Library edition:

Spring 1871—Albany meeting (I, 27)
 Summer 1871—arrival at Gardencourt (I, 1 ff.)
 September 1871—visit to London (I, 196-197)
 Early November 1871—death of Touchett (I, 325)
 Winter 1871-1872—Paris interlude (I, 302 ff.)
 Late February 1872—visit to San Remo (I, 315)
 Spring 1872—arrival at Florence (I, 325 ff.)
 May 1872—meeting Osmond (I, 325, 364)
 Late May 1872—visit to Rome (I, 405, 408; II, 11, 12, 23)
 July 1872—meeting with Ludlows in Switzerland (II, 32-33)
 September 1872—Henrietta's return to America (II, 36-37)

Late November 1872—departure of Ludlows (II, 35-36)
 December 1872-March 1873—tour of the East with Madame Merle (II, 37, 40)
 April 1873—in Rome with Madame Merle (II, 40)
 May 1873—interview with Goodwood in Florence (II, 31, 41)
 June 1873—marriage to Osmond (II, 137)
 April 1874—birth of child (II, 89, 96)
 Late October 1874—death of child (II, 89, 96, 142)
 Late April 1875—visit of Ralph to Rome (II, 139)
 October (or early November) 1876—visit of Rosier to Madame Merle (II, 89)
 Late November 1876 (about two weeks later)—arrival of Ralph and Lord Warburton in Rome (II, 89, 100, 120, 123, 127, 145, 147)
 December 1876—The vigil before the fire (II, 161, 173, 186 ff.)
 January 1877—Warburton's departure (II, 206, 262, 265)
 Late February 1877—Ralph's decision to return to England (II, 298)
 March 1877—visit to Coliseum (II, 340)
 April 1877 (two weeks later)—telegram from Mrs. Touchett (II, 345, 351)
 Late May 1877—Ralph's burial (II, 420)
 June 1877 (nine days later)—Isabel's return to Rome (II, 424, 437)

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

HOWARD C. KEY

Dr. Key is a professor at North Texas State College.

In checking the figures in our article "Henry James and Gestation," we used a copy of the New York edition of *The Portrait of a Lady* not now available to me. I cannot, therefore, retrace all our steps so exactly as I should like to.

Messrs. Wallace and Broderick are correct in their contention that we overlooked James's setting Isabel's marriage in the month of June. It seems to me, however, that our correctors have overstated their case when they refer to James's handling of the time element in this affair as precise, obvious, or even casual. The words dating the wedding occur in a short phrase on page 120 (London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921, Vol. 7); the actual date to

which this phrase must be indirectly referred is on page 78. The *only* figures (round, unimaginative, or otherwise) in the immediate vicinity of the 40-month gap bear out the main thesis of our article: that an inexact reference at this point is, to rephrase a borrowed "Jamesism," something less than felicitous—but certainly not calamitous.

It is regrettable that Messrs. Wallace and Broderick read into our article a malicious attack upon James's literary artistry. Even were we not the ardent admirers of James that we are, we would scarcely have the temerity to undertake the impossible task of diminishing such a universally recog-

nized reputation. By treating the apparent oversight in a light manner and indulging in some obviously far-fetched speculation, we had hoped to indicate that we considered

the whole matter trivial and inconsequential. Our efforts in this direction were mistaken, alas, for an irreverence toward James and Isabel which neither of us feels.

STRICTLY FROM SACKVILLE

Renaissance readers may wonder, as did Professor Irby B. Cauthen (Virginia), just when *College English* is going to publish the piece on *Gorboduc* mentioned on the cover of the October 1959 issue. The partial answer must be, Never. The rest of the

answer notes that the Editor, nearly twenty years away from Sackville, mistook the Induction to *The Mirrour for Magistrates* referred to in Frances Lenk's poem in the issue for an Induction to *Gorboduc*. He regrets the minor confusion.

News and Ideas

THE GROWING ADVANCED PLACEMENT Program (college courses given in schools for college credit) will be the subject of a conference at Northwestern, June 23-25. Write Professor Wallace W. Douglas, Dept. of English, for information.

HARVARD PRESIDENT PUSEY'S REPORT for 1958-1959 mentions (page 9) the fact that although the University has been able "to raise the average professorial salary in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to \$16,000," this is "already clearly insufficient." He says later: "... perhaps all we have done has been to restore the real income of the Faculty, before taxes, to a level roughly equal to that achieved in 1930."

THE FIRST YEATS INTERNATIONAL Summer School will be held in the Yeats country, Sligo, Ireland, 13-27 August this year, with Yeats scholars like Henn, Ure, Kermodé, and Jeffares participating, and with performances of some of Yeats's plays and poems. The academic costs are \$27, the bed and board \$18, according to the announcement. Write Mr. Thomas Mulaney, The Yeats Society, Sligo.

THE BUSINESSMAN IN THE NOVEL is the subject of the first of a series of Library Study Guides issued by the University of North Carolina Library. A listing with critical commentary, it is 36 pages

long and it sells for 75¢ (50¢ within the state) from the Wilson Library.

MORE SUMMER MEETINGS: THE Summer School of Linguistics at the University of Alberta, 4 July-13 August (write Dr. E. Reinhold); the Poetry Reading Workshop for teachers in the schools, at San Francisco State College, 20-24 June, with Ransom, Schevill, Ostroff, and Leonard Wolf (write Dr. Wolf); the Fourth Contemporary Literature Conference, with Ciardi, Cowley, and others, at Millersville (Pa.) State College, 18 July-5 August (write Prof. L. S. Lingenfelter); the Fifth Annual Writers' Conference, at the School of Journalism, University of Syracuse, 15-27 August (write the Dean); Indiana School of Letters, 17 June-30 July, with Ellmann, Lewis, Cambon, and Cox, and including the Indiana Writers' Conference, 6-12 July (write Director N. P. Stallknecht).

A NEW MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM, the M.A. in English Writing, will begin at Hollins College this year with instruction from, among others, John W. Aldridge as Writer-in-Residence and Louis D. Rubin, Jr., Chairman of the Department. Writing, literary criticism, and contemporary literature will form the subject matter, and the candidate may offer a "creative" thesis. The announcement asks prospective students to apply to the Office of the Graduate Council.

Books

SOME RECENT ESSAY ANTHOLOGIES

WILLIAM FROST

An editor working on the Twickenham edition of Pope's Homer, an editor of Dryden and author of Dryden and the Art of Translation (1955), and author of articles on Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Pope, Dr. Frost is an associate professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

THE CHARACTER OF PROSE, ed. Wallace Douglas (Houghton Mifflin, 310 pp., \$2). THE ART OF THE ESSAY, ed. Leslie Fiedler (Crowell, 640 pp., \$4.25). READING FOR WRITING, ed. Arthur Mizener (Holt, 323 pp., \$3.25). INQUIRY & EXPRESSION, ed. H. C. Martin and R. M. Ohmann (Rinehart, 751 pp., \$5).

Over three years ago, in the review "Boilerplate and Talkie-Talkie" (*College English*, XVIII, Nov. 1956), I discussed a dozen freshman English essay anthologies published within a single year. Since then, the rate of production having apparently abated somewhat, I have examined about a dozen more.¹ Most of these latter would be fairly well described by the generalizations in the earlier review. Four, however, seem sufficiently offbeat to call for a postscript.

Fiedler, which specializes in an unusually large selection of articles on popular arts,

is gloomy and introspective. Introspective: we move from myself (Lamb, "Two Attempts at an Autobiography," Dylan Thomas, a "A Visit to Grandpa's") to my surroundings (Fiedler, "Montana: or the End of Jean Jacques Rousseau," Arnold, "America Is Not Interesting") and finally to my tastes (Popkin, "Hollywood Discovers the Bible," Baudelaire, "Poe—His Life and Works: 1852"). Gloomy: although my childhood was crummy enough ("nothing except . . . marginal experiences and abnormal cases . . . the minor note"—p. 59) and my surroundings as described by Henry Miller on p. 129 are depressing at best, still my tastes for the most part (223 pages to prizefights, jazz, and comics, 67 to standard American authors of the nineteenth century) are even worse ("THE FUTURE OF HIGH CULTURE: DARK . . . THE FUTURE OF MASS CULTURE: DARKER"—pp. 276-277). Exceptions to the book's generally morose, portentous tone and outlook ("Bards of old sat in the shade of sacred trees for inspiration. Those who sing the epic of today [science fiction writers] sit in the vast shadow cast by the toadstool of Hiroshima"—p. 484) include Miller's "Soirée in Hollywood," the best piece in the book, and some of the nostalgic material, like Katherine Anne Porter's eulogy of a Louisiana town.

This very nearly single-minded negativism, this pervasive waste-land-itis, should certainly give the freshmen pause wherever the anthology is adopted. Some of the more precocious may have a few questions. Why, for example, with all the pages devoted to space ships and comic strips, is there not a single essay on a twentieth-

¹Besides those reviewed, these included ATLANTIC ESSAYS, ed. Samuel N. Bogorad and Cary B. Graham (Heath, 453 pp., \$4.50), THOUGHT IN PROSE, ed. Richard S. Beal and Jacob Korg (Prentice-Hall, 611 pp., \$5.25), CONSTRUCTIVE THEME WRITING, ed. Mary Ellen Chase and Henry W. Sams (Holt, 660 pp., \$4.95), IDEAS AND BACK-GROUNDS, ed. Keith G. Huntress, Fred W. Lorch, and W. Paul Jones (American Book, 514 pp., \$4), ESSAYS TODAY 3, ed. Richard M. Ludwig (Harcourt, Brace, 186 pp., \$1.35), MODERN AMERICAN READER, ed. Irving Ribner and Paul G. Ruggiers (American Book, 552 pp., \$4.90), PROSE READINGS, ed. William M. Sale, Jr. (Rinehart, 367 pp., \$4.90), and IDEAS IN CONTEXT, ed. Joseph Satin (Houghton Mifflin, 394 pp., \$3).

century writer worth anybody's serious attention? Why is all "High Culture" nineteenth-century culture? Did art stop short at the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine? Why, finally, must we have a corny Perelman piece instead of a vintage one, and why must we have thirteen pages on Cecil B. De Mille and zero pages on Yeats?

Bleak though Fiedler certainly is, however, it seems a light and cheerful anthology by contrast to Martin & Ohmann. Representative topics for the "units" into which this one breaks up are "Is the Will Free?" "In Plague Time," "Does the Theory of Evolution Have Ethical Consequences?" and "The Nature of Pain"—something any diligent neophyte is likely to discover a good deal about in the course of engorging nonstop sentences in an essay by Boethius or comparing Joyce's sermon on hell (from the *Portrait*) to Schopenhauer's reflections on the sufferings of the world. Other sections include "The Traditional or the New in Architecture" (fifty close-packed, illustrationless pages ["Nobody would mistake the Maison Carré, at Nîmes, for Greek work, nor the Pazzi Chapel for Roman"—p. 324] by Ralph Adams Cram, Geoffrey Scott, Le Corbusier, and a couple of others) and "What Is the Meaning of Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'?" A long way from popcult, certainly, but where have we arrived?

The real subject of the book, according to the editors, is neither pain nor poetry nor architecture but rhetoric: the freshman reads about Keats or the Maison Carré to study ways of "proving." *What* is proved is of no consequence. "Statements such as 'the classical style is the greatest style,'" the editors explain, "frequently mean little more than 'I prefer the classical style.' . . . All these 'proofs' are valid without certain [unexplained] limits, but they all rest on a basis of ethical or esthetic preference, and *de gustibus non est disputandum*" (p. 303).

This central editorial position, reiterated elsewhere, raises certain questions. Why, if there's no disputing about architectural tastes, must we patiently plow through all these rocky architectural disputes? Why, if we live in "an age which some see as

reaching back to Christianity for answers to problems it has repeatedly failed to solve," as the editors put it on page 631, must we masochistically subject ourselves to forty pages by Lactantius, Gibbon, Pater, Shaw, and Toynbee on the rise of this now moribund cult? Couldn't the points about logic, rhetoric, concrete and abstract language, rhythm (illustrated by twenty-three pages of Forster, Wolfe, G. M. Young, Lawrence, and James), and so on be made in a good book focused directly on such topics, like Beardsley's *Thinking Straight*? Couldn't the points about economy of style (illustrated by Joyce's "Clay" and Steele's "How Beautiful with Shoes") be made more economically?

The anthology itself perhaps suggests an answer to questions of this kind in some of the headnotes to the selections. The contributors are worth reading, whatever the merits of their ideas, may be because they were, it seems, such consequential people. Emily Dickinson is "America's greatest poetess"; Plato and Aristotle were "the two giants of Greek philosophy"; Thoreau "is best known for his book *Walden*"; Carl Friedrich "teaches political theory at Harvard"; Karl Marx "was the father of modern communism"; E. A. Hooton "taught anthropology at Harvard until his death"; "Rock Me to Sleep" by Elizabeth Akers Allen "has been one of the most truly popular American poems"; W. E. Hocking "was a philosopher and a teacher of philosophy at Harvard for most of his adult years"; and E. E. Cummings was "Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard in 1953." One wonders how poor old Thucydides ("471?-400 B. C., Greek historian") and Henry Knighton ("fl. 1363, obscure English annalist") ever made the roster.

There are several superficial resemblances between Mizener and Douglas. Each has forty-two selections; each starts from the premise that competent prose is an art worth scrutinizing; and each provides specific questions on verbal details of the selections with the evident and laudable motive of getting freshmen, not to shadow-box with rhetoric, but to read attentively. The striking difference between the two anthologies arises from the fact that for

Douglas competent prose appears to be pretty much an end in itself, so that whether it is used by Strachey to describe Queen Victoria's death, by Shaw to fulminate against *Cymbeline*, by Wodehouse to compare himself with Shakespeare, or by Wallach's to advertise free clip-on buttons for men's shirts doesn't matter. As a consequence the anthology proliferates into whimsy (Stanley Walker), random editorializing (V. Whitehead on reviving the classics, De Voto on *Harper's Magazine*), human-interest historiography (lots about royal families), ephemeral journalism (Schickel, Reichley, Holmes), personal reminiscence (Shaw, Keynes), and, above all, gossip (N. Douglas on Lawrence, Beer-bohm and Noyes on Swinburne, Morton Hunt on Helaine Newstead, a medievalist at Hunter College). A good deal of this farrago is literary in the bad sense of being dandyish, self-conscious, mannered, and remote. Freshmen a bit vague about Swinburne, Eleanor of Aquitaine, or Wallach's are sure to need briefing beyond anything provided in the text.

Mizener is a contrast in several respects. The selections are much shorter than

Douglas's (about 1700 words each), the questions following them are more skillful, several selections are fully analyzed by the editor, and the print and format are superior. Furthermore, though a few of the entries are the flimsiest light entertainment or magazine editorializing (*three* Thurburs, L. S. White's "Farewell My Lovely," Alastair Cooke on the alleged folksy quaintness of Manhattan), and though it would have made more sense to follow the pretentious Veblen by Mencken's brisk destructive analysis of him rather than by Heilbroner's sometimes footling adulation ("A flouter of convention, he gave all his students the same grade, regardless of their work"), nevertheless the fact that a definite presiding point of view—humanism—is set forth in selections by Panofsky, Macaulay, Bacon, Geoffrey Scott, and Katherine Anne Porter and is reflected elsewhere in the anthology gives this book unity and distinction. Teachers of college composition who want their students not only to read carefully but also to ponder some questions worth considering could do worse than take a look at Mizener.

Other Books

THE IDYLLS OF THEOCRITUS IN ENGLISH VERSE, tr. W. Douglas Hall (Shakespeare Head, 1959, 120 pp., \$2.50). A witty Frenchman has said of translations: "if they are beautiful, they are not faithful; if faithful, they are not beautiful." This translation is both beautiful and faithful in its own fashion. In fidelity it gets the palm over all others, for it is based on the Greek text, the most accurate prose translation, and the scholarly notes of A. S. Gow's recent monumental edition of Theocritus. Beauty contests are hard to judge, yet this version as compared to Calverley's Victorian translation, or those of Trevelyan (1925), Lindsay (1930), Chamberlain (1936), is not without honor. A sense of English rhythm, shown in the variety of meters used, the expansion or contraction of the Greek to get sharper idioms of English poetry, all result in a

version which shows clearly the grain of pastoral rhetoric, which it must for Theocritus. On page 112 for "*Nereus*" read "*Neleus*."

JAMES A. NOTOPOULOS

TRINITY COLLEGE

ONE GREAT SOCIETY: HUMANE LEARNING IN THE U. S., Howard Mumford Jones (Harcourt, Brace, 1959, 241 pp., \$4.50). Here Professor Jones, as ranging a humanist and teacher (Harvard) as we have in the field, explores and makes demands on the humanities officially for the ACLS Commission on the Humanities but humanistically for himself and for all of us. What the humanities are (the study of man in his non-biological, non-societal status), what they contribute to individuals and to nations, what scholars are and scholarship is—these are the questions Mr. Jones

answers, always with clarity and never with dogmatism. Incidentally, the case for not expecting so much from freshman English is beautifully put on pp. 191-192, where Jones insists that writing is not a mere skill and that it involves total exposure to other disciplines to develop.

OEDIPUS THE KING, Sophocles, trans. Bernard M. W. Knox (Pocket Books, Inc., 1959, 110 pp., paper, 35¢). **THE OEDIPUS PLAYS OF SOPHOCLES**, trans. Paul Roche (New American Library, 1959, 224 pp., paper, 75¢). Professor Knox (Yale) admits to "sacrificing everything else" in favor of clarity and vigor in his prose translation. The result is an eminently readable, actable rendition of Sophocles's tragedy. Sensibly prefaced by historical and production notes, this volume provides a splendid high school or college introduction to one of the masterpieces of western drama. Roche's verse translations of the three Oedipus plays may represent the originals with more accuracy, but they fail to read with the clear, forthright simplicity of Knox's version. Nevertheless, they have force and beauty, and this volume brings the Theban plays together in convenient form. A foreword on translation, notes on production, and a glossary of names supplement the plays.

GEORGE E. NICHOLS III

TRINITY COLLEGE

HAWTHORNE'S TRAGIC VISION, Roy R. Male (Texas, 1957, 187 pp., \$3.75). Professor Male (Oklahoma) makes a good case in general for the depth of Hawthorne's tragic vision. (1) Hawthorne insists on the organic vs. the mechanical, and on "purification" of the organic heart. (2) In the early tales, he sees both sides of the question. (3) His masterpiece depends on its revelation of the paradoxical "secret of man's moral growth" in Dimmesdale's "purification." (4) In *Blithedale*, "the characters attain no tragic vision." (5) Donatello is like Dimmesdale, rising "spiritually and intellectually." Male's final inference is that although Hawthorne offers no formula, he implies that man must be "involved with time" and yet must "contemplate the eternal. This is the tragic vision of Hawthorne's fiction."

HOW WORDS FIT TOGETHER, Louis Foley (Babson Institute Press, 427 Main Street, Melrose, Mass., 1958, 125 pp., \$3). Dr. Foley does not conform to older ways because they happen to be ingrained, nor does he adapt new patterns on behalf of the ease and comfort to be found in following trends imposed by an insufficiently trained majority. With him absorbing criteria are care for euphony, as in the avoidance of "jarring echoes" that arise from insensitiveness to sound-repetitions, and the prevention of dislocations of thought due to faulty placements, as in the split infinitive and other adverbial connections. He is concerned that the language "furrows" run shall be straight, not "crooked"; that the whole language matter shall not be one of regulation by "rules," but instead be motivated and upheld by common sense and intelligent taste. His book is an entertaining, while safe and conservative, guide to good English. It should benefit all readers, even the most mature and self-confident. At the price now set, it is a splendid "buy."

A. M. WITHERS

CONCORD COLLEGE, W. VA.

TOMORROW'S PROFESSORS: A REPORT OF THE COLLEGE FACULTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM, John S. Diekhoff (Fund for Advancement of Education, 1959, 91 pp., paper, n.p.). Almost every college teacher could profit by reading this report of a professional program run on FAA grants 1953-1958. The results show the value of teaching a beginning teacher how to teach, as opposed to letting him learn the hard way, and the problems involved in carrying out such a noble aim.

IN FRIENDLY CANDOR, Edward Weeks (Little, Brown, 1959, 301 pp., \$4). The ebullient editor of the *Atlantic* and *Atlantic* books here reminisces about his own lively youth and early career, and about *Atlantic* authors, then shifts into fishing sketches, and finally into speeches (one of them given to the NCTE Convention in 1958). Mr. Week's writing is admirable, although one might occasionally wish for more bite in the friendly candor.

LITERATURE STUDY IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS, Dwight L. Burton (Holt,

1959, 291 pp., n.p.l.). A well-organized and well-written survey of what adolescents ought to read and how they can be taught to appreciate the different genres of literature. Never pretentious or pseudo-technical, never sentimental or vague, Professor Burton (Florida State; Editor of *The English Journal*) guides the teacher along practical lines, offering a variety of methods, titles, and aids to choose from.

THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL TODAY: A FIRST REPORT TO INTERESTED CITIZENS, James Bryant Conant (McGraw-Hill, 1959, 141 pp., paper, \$1). The now-famous report made by the former President of Harvard for the Educational Testing Service under a Carnegie grant should be read by all American citizens, especially those close to the schools in any way. From his personal visits to four dozen high schools across the country and from his trained ability to evaluate evidence, Dr. Conant is able to provide 21 concrete recommendations for improving the situation: more counseling, no tracks, required general education for all, ability grouping, an English theme every week corrected by the teacher, composition tests in each grade, remedial reading—but one should read the rest and the arguments for all.

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI; THE WHITE DEVIL, John Webster, ed. F. L. Lucas (Macmillan, 1959, 223; 224 pp., \$3.75 each). Professor Lucas (Cambridge) has re-edited his classic 1927 texts of and commentaries on "the two plays of Webster that really matter," cutting down pragmatically on the introduction, bibliography, biography, and textual notes. Although a teacher-scholar will miss the old four-volume edition of Webster, he can doubtless use these new arrangements more handily.

LITERATURE AS EXPERIENCE, Wallace A. Bacon and Robert S. Breen (McGraw-Hill, 1959, 336 pp., \$5). This book is designed to be used (though costing \$5) in conjunction with a standard anthology of literature, yet its elaborate psychological and esthetic explanations

make it difficult to coordinate with another text. For the teacher, however, it contains many stimulating ideas.

RALPH M. WILLIAMS

TRINITY COLLEGE

FABULOUS VOYAGER: JAMES JOYCE'S ULYSSES, Richard M. Kain (Viking, 1959, 299 pp., paper, \$1.25). Compass Book reprint of the 1947 handbook to the novel, with its clear synthesis of the major patterns and materials, its indexes of characters, places, and verbal motifs, plus a short summary of Joyce studies in the past decade. A good companion to a book that will always need such companions.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR, John H. Middendorf; **PUNCTUATION GUIDE**, Roger M. Jones; **WRITING GUIDE**, Roger M. Jones; **VOCABULARY FOR LITERATURE**, John H. Middendorf and Ernest Griffin; **LIBRARY GUIDE**, Donald Cook and Hilda Grieder (Data-Guide, 1956-1958, 2 pp., plastic, 79¢). These are the notebook-sized reference charts that look so neat in bookstores and that inspection shows to be eminently usable. The grammar guide is prescriptive (e.g., "Double negatives are considered to cancel each other"), but the punctuation and mechanics ("Writing") pages are simple, clear, and handier than handbooks. Most useful may be the library guide (for Dewey systems) and the literary terms glossary (by two professors from Columbia). If the definitions in the latter are brief, they are most succinct, and the whole list might well be the required basis for discussion in an introduction to literature course. The publishers also announce an English and American Literature guide to come.

THEIRS BE THE GUILT, Upton Sinclair (Twayne, 1959, 287 pp., \$3.95). There is obvious timeliness in this revision of Sinclair's first novel, *Manassas*, written in 1903. There is pointed challenge also in the new title. The novel suffers still from being overlaid with historical and didactic material. Allen Montague, the Lanny Budd of those days, undergoes too facile a conversion to Abolitionism, but the hectic Southern blood in the months immediately

before Sumter is vividly portrayed, and there are other powerful scenes. Sinclair drastically simplifies history, but he does give it a torrential force, which is to his advantage as novelist.

GEORGE J. BECKER

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

INTERPRETATIONS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, ed. Charles Feidelson and Paul Brodtkorb (Oxford, 1959, 386 pp., paper, \$2.65). A collection of articles and essays, many of them already well known, and some possibly to be made so in being selected for the Galaxy series by these American specialists from Yale. The coverage runs from Hawthorne and Poe to Pearce's perceptive study of Williams, Cummings, and Stevens; Emerson receives three pieces (Miller, Adams, Whicher), and other giants two: Hawthorne (Waggoner, Q. Leavis), Poe (Abel, Davidson), Melville (Short, Parke—a little-known article on the symbolic levels of *Moby-Dick* that provides a most illuminating organization), Whitman (Chase, Brown), Twain (Marx, Cox), James (Van Ghent, Krook), Hemingway (Halliday, Hoffman), and Faulkner (Lewis, Kazin); Thoreau (Paul), Dickinson (Tate), and Dreiser (Trilling) have one essay each. Apparently usable as a companion to an American survey course, which it would admirably serve, it could also be used in a course in American fiction, since only 4 of the 23 items are on poetry, and since it would give the variety of approach necessarily lacking in the treatises by Cowie and Chase.

PRACTICAL METHODS IN SPEECH, Harold Barrett (Holt, 1959, 326 pp., \$3.75). Professor Barrett (Compton) has written an elementary text to save more classroom time for actual oral practice by the students. At some points (such as the discussion of bodily action) students may well wish he had been more detailed and explicit, but in general he has produced a clearly written text covering basic essentials for a beginning speech course.

RALPH M. WILLIAMS

TRINITY COLLEGE

GUIDE TO COLLEGES, Gene R. Hawes (New American Library, 1959, 256 pp.,

paper, 75¢). This volume will prove useful to numerous teachers and students as well as parents and prospective students in the next decade. Compiled by the CEEB editor, it classifies institutions into twelve categories and lists compactly the facts about each. An appendix shows how to interpret these facts, and an introduction by President Fels of Bennington warns against depending too much on the mere facts in choosing a college.

THE PORTABLE MELVILLE, ed. Jay Leyda (Viking, 1952, 746 pp., \$1.45). The second printing (1959) of this oversize anthology reminds us of its virtues: *Typee* and *Billy Budd* entire; stories, selections, poems, and letters; and the connective tissue that only the editor of *The Melville Log* might supply. The effect of the choice is biographical rather than literary, but it cannot be duplicated in other Melville textbooks so available.

ANTIC HAY and THE GIOCONDA SMILE, Aldous Huxley (Harper, 1957, \$1.25). The addition of this novel and short story to Harper's Modern Classics series is to be welcomed by teachers of modern fiction. Reread in 1959, *Antic Hay* is still brilliant satire. Unlike Huxley's later works it provides its characters with no escape hatch from the materialistic world of the twentieth century. Even the "proportion" discovered by Shearwater, as he pedals in his laboratory, is mirage and delusion. The introduction by Charles J. Rolo deals with points of importance in Huxley's life and work. In this reviewer's opinion, however, Mr. Rolo is not justified in finding "a core of mystical feeling" in the early works of Huxley. Rather than a *core* it is a *glimmering*. The Huxley of *Chrome Yellow*, *Antic Hay*, "The Gioconda Smile," and *Those Barren Leaves* is chiefly a satirist of unreason who supplies no Houyhnhnms for his Gullivers (Gumbrils) to visit.

MARGARET CHURCH

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

SELECTED AMERICAN SPEECHES ON BASIC ISSUES (1850-1950), ed. Carl G. Brandt and Edward M. Shafter Jr. (Houghton Mifflin, 1960, 426 pp., paper,

\$2.25. Just that, from Henry Clay to F.D.R., with introductory commentary and a bibliography, by teachers from the University of Michigan.

ORAL INTERPRETATION, Charlotte I. Lee (2nd ed., Houghton Mifflin, 1959, 564 pp., \$4.75). Professor Lee (Northwestern) has divided her book into four parts: Analysis, Nondramatic prose, Drama, and Poetry. A great many selections for interpretation are included, but no exercises except in the chapters on the use of the body and voice in Part I, because, as the author says, "students seldom do exercises anyway." Several parts of this book set it off above other books on oral interpretation: Professor Lee's own sample analyses, for example, and the section on cadence in free verse.

RALPH M. WILLIAMS
TRINITY COLLEGE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, ed. Perry Miller (George Braziller, 1959, 514 pp., \$7.50). This anthology begins with a 28-page survey of the six great writers of the American Renaissance that is magnificent: the long experience and reflection that Professor Miller (Harvard) brings to this task are matched by the clarity and precision with which he orders his comprehensiveness. The rest of the volume is a nice collection of a half-dozen manageable pieces from Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman each—all major and classic and worthy (except for the overrated war-horses, "Ethan Brand" and "Benito Cereno") for the general reader. For college classroom use, however, this volume is matched by almost any standard anthology textbook of American literature.

PROWESS AND CHARITY IN THE PERCEVAL OF CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES, by David C. Fowler (University of Washington, 1959, 81 pp., \$3). Professor Fowler of the University of Washington proposes the novel thesis that *Perceval* "challenges the very foundation of feudal society" in a "revolutionary" way. The presentation of Chrétien as a social critic would be more persuasive if it were

carried less far: many medieval writers held charity superior to prowess, but Professor Fowler's thesis goes beyond his evidence. The chief interest and value of his book lie in its discussions of the structure of the poem and the development of Perceval's character in response to events. On these literary matters the author is perceptive and enlightening; his sociology can be disregarded.

J. MITCHELL MORSE
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

LITERARY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES: BIBLIOGRAPHY SUPPLEMENT, ed. Richard Ludwig (Macmillan, 1959, 268 pp., \$8.50). A most welcome addition to the Volume III of the *LHUS* is this "selective" listing of American texts, biography, and criticism published in the decade since the *History* first appeared, plus a larger index of the whole work. No teacher or student of American literature can afford not to have this sequel at his beck and call. One of the most interesting features of the volume is its elevation of fifteen contemporary writers (plus Tourgée, d. 1905) to consideration, which constitutes a kind of Hall of Fame.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH IN SPEECH, J. Jeffery Auer (Harper, 1959, 244 pp., \$5). Whereas research in most fields relies on one method, research in speech may rely on three—the historical, the descriptive, and the experimental. This fact, Professor Auer (Indiana) feels, justifies this introduction to collecting, interpreting, and writing up of evidence in various types of speech research projects. He covers his ground thoroughly, from fundamental material that would be in most freshman composition courses which include source themes to advanced statistical concepts such as a standard deviation and the coefficient of correlation. This work should prove most helpful to graduate students in speech.

RALPH M. WILLIAMS
TRINITY COLLEGE

A CASEBOOK ON HENRY JAMES'S "THE TURN OF THE SCREW," ed. Gerald Willen (Crowell, 1960, 325 pp.,

paper, \$2.50). Editor Willen (Fairleigh Dickinson) reprints the story and James's ambiguous preface, adding a James bibliography and some exercises for "controlled" research. The bulk of the book is composed of fifteen critical essays pro and con the Kenton-Wilson-Goddard "hallucination" theory, some of them (e. g., Heilman, Lydenberg, Firebaugh) reaching beyond into more symbolic serious readings. For one reader, Edmund Wilson (who has contributed a new paragraph reaffirming his theory)—despite some little weaknesses—writes with a depth and comprehensiveness that makes his thesis as exciting as it was in the 1930's and still somehow richer than the arguments of either his opponents or his supporters.

COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS ON SHAKESPEARE. ed. Terence Hawkes (Putnam, 1959, 256 pp., \$2.50; paper, \$1.35). This usefully succeeds in making more available a mass of material mainly in Raynor's *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism* published in 1930 in two volumes. Professor Hawkes, of the University of Buffalo, is to be complimented on his work of selection, arrangement, and connection; an index, however, is lacking. He gives us first 25 pages of Coleridge's basic comments on poetry and drama, well worth rereading. Following are some 50 pages of general criticism of Shakespeare, and the rest is given to Coleridge's *aperçus* on single plays and passages. Any teacher of Shakespeare may supply himself easily with formidable ammunition from him whom Professor Harbage, in his readable introduction, calls "the greatest of Shakespearian critics."

MORSE ALLEN

TRINITY COLLEGE

YVOR WINTERS: A BIBLIOGRAPHY. Kenneth A. Lohf and Eugene P. Sheehy (Alan Swallow, 1959, 35 pp., \$2.50). A working list of the poet-critic's two dozen books and the many other pieces by and about him.

THE ADVENTURE OF LEARNING IN COLLEGE: AN UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE TO PRODUCTIVE STUDY. Roger H. Garrison (Harper,

1959, 270 pp., \$3.25). Written for the undergraduate (by a teacher at Briarcliff), this book can also fit the teacher's needs for continuing appreciation of what his students are going through and what they need.

DOCTRINE AND POETRY: AUGUSTINE'S INFLUENCE ON OLD ENGLISH POETRY, by Bernard F. Huppé (State University of New York, 1959, 248 pp., \$6). The traditional view that Anglo-Saxon poetry was largely pagan in its values has lately been challenged by such scholars as D. W. Roberston and Robert Kaske, who have brilliantly demonstrated the influence of Christian theology. To their argument Professor Huppé of Harpur College brings a detailed analysis of the influence of Saint Augustine's literary theory on Aldhelm, Bede, and Caedmon, and suggests that further study will show a similar influence on such poems as *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, and *The Seafarer*. Kaske's masterly study of the theme of *sapientia et fortitudo* in *Beowulf* has already borne him out.

J. MITCHELL MORSE

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

THE MANSION, William Faulkner (Random House, 1959, 436 pp., \$4.75). The story of the Snopes family, "conceived and begun in 1925," as the author says, is now complete with the death of Flem, in a third volume with *The Hamlet* and *The Town*. In the course of arriving at this poetic justice, Faulkner touches on a number of his other renditions of Yoknapatawpha myth, this time inserting a note saving that he is more aware than readers of the discrepancies among versions. Although many Faulknerians may still find Gavin Stevens the only fictional flaw in the County, they cannot help but welcome to the company of Faulkner's achievements Mink Snopes, who in this book becomes representative of simple humanity, joining Eula Varner Snopes (Sex) as the only really effective anti-Flem agents in the trilogy.

THE AUTOCRAT'S MISCELLANIES. Oliver Wendell Holmes, ed. Albert Mor-

dell (Twayne, 1959, 356 pp., \$6). "Literary reviews and rare essays": three posthumous Autocrat papers, speeches and memoirs about contemporaries, war and scientific articles—supplementing the collected works.

DIVINE POETRY IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND by Lily B. Campbell (Univ. of California, 1959, 268 pp., \$5.00). How a Christian literature emerged from the English Bible to oppose the rising taste for pagan song and how it was shaped by Tudor students, clergy, and the sophisticated pointing toward Milton—these are the concerns of the author (California), who, beginning with Coverdale's *Goostly Psalms* (1538), traces into Jacobean times versifications of the Psalter, the so-called works of Solomon, the *Divine Week* of Du Bartas, and the short epics about Biblical heroes. Part II surveys Biblical plays in English for schools, special audiences and public theatres, supplementing what we have known of the influential *Dramata Sacra* and *Terentius Christianus* of the Continent. Well documented and indexed, selective rather than exhaustive, it will stimulate research.

KENNETH W. CAMERON

TRINITY COLLEGE

LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE PROFESSIONS, Earl J. McGrath (Teachers College, Columbia, 1959, 63 pp., paper, \$1.50). McGrath, former U. S. Commissioner of Education, and now director of the Institute of Higher Education at Teachers College, continues his account of the split between liberal education in the sense of "... the cultivation of intellectual skills and ... a reasoned outlook on life ..." and professional education. The professional schools should require general education; the colleges should stop the "... proliferation of specialized courses" and look once more to genuinely liberal education. The argument is historically well-documented. The writing is free of educationese.

WILLIAM P. HOLDEN

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

THE LIBERAL ARTS AS REVIEWED BY FACULTY MEMBERS IN PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS, Paul L. Dressel, Lewis B. Mayhew, and Earl J. McGrath (Teachers College, Columbia, 1959, 68 pp., paper, \$1.50). The second in a series from the Institute of Higher Education, this survey shows that certain professional and technical teachers approve of the liberal arts and sciences but demonstrate "a strong inclination toward requiring those [liberal arts] courses which have a direct relevance for the vocational field."

FROM HOMER TO JOYCE: A STUDY GUIDE TO THIRTY-SIX GREAT BOOKS, J. Sherwood Weber, Jules A. Wein, Arthur Waldhorn, and Arthur Zeiger (Holt, 1959, 275 pp., paper, \$1.95). An excellent handbook, by teachers at Pratt and CCNY, suitable for Humanities and Comparative Literature courses and Great Books discussions on all levels. Each writer and book receives a general essay, a set of questions on "theme, plot, structure, setting, language and style, character, tone, relationship to other great books, and impact on man's intellectual and cultural development," and a critical list of critical material and editions.

COMPLETE POETRY AND SELECTED PROSE OF WALT WHITMAN, ed. James E. Miller, Jr. (Houghton Mifflin, 1959, 516 pp., paper, \$1.15). Of the currently available Whitman texts, this Riverside paperback is certainly one of the most useful. The "Leaves of Grass" given here is the ninth or "deathbed" edition, plus "Old Age Echoes" and twenty-nine rejected poems. The selected prose includes the complete "prefaces" to "Leaves of Grass" and "Democratic Vistas." There is a useful "glossary of difficult terms." Professor Miller (Nebraska) writes a sound and unpretentious introduction, in which he includes notes on "some poems for introduction" and "some poems for analysis." Here is a serviceable text.

SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE

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